GMA accused of striking deal with drug firms

By Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. MANUEL ROXAS YESTERDAY ACcused President Macapagal-Arroyo of hatching a "devious conspiracy" with transnational drug companies during an allegedly secret meeting in Malacañang to subvert the Cheaper Medicines Law and "keep critical drugs out of the reach of the poor."

Roxas has summoned the President and her Cabinet officials to a hearing on Monday of the Senate Oversight Committee on

GMA ACCUSED: A6

ACROSS/ A14
Ex-cop chief faces 6 sex cases in Davao del Sur

2BU / C1
6th Harry Potter character grows up quickly in brilliant film

METRO / A17
Doc in botched butt treatment hunted by NBI

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, July 11, 2009 ** Vol. 24 / No. 213

PEACE CONCERNS Muslim businessmen in Iligan City pray for peace even as the police heighten security in central Mindanao.

₱7.2-B poll deal signed

No TRO from SC; all systems go

By Kristine L. Alave and Norman Bordadora

THE PLANNED AUTOMATED polls in 2010 loomed ever larger with the signing yesterday of a historic P7.2-billion contract between the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and Smartmatic TIM Corp.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo and Smartmatic TIM board chair Juan Villa signed the contract for the agreement that was forged after a lengthy and complicated bidding process in which seven bidders took part, two Senate hearings, the threat of an injunction, and corporate wrangling between the providers.

The contract signing was initially scheduled at 2 p.m. but was stalled by three hours because of "minor editorial changes," according to Melo.

Despite the petition filed on Thurs-

P7.2-B POLL: A6

OFFERINGS FOR CORY President Arroyo receives communion during the special Mass for the healing of ex-President Cory Aquino at the Rizal Ceremonial Hall in the Palace on Friday. Behind Ms Arroyo are Vice President Noli de Castro and Cristina Perez Ervin. Most Cabinet members are in attendance along with Ms Aquino's in-laws Lupita Kashiwahara and ex-Sen. Tessie Oreta. Even after the Friday requiem Masses held daily at the Greenhills 5 chapel ended last Thursday, Masses for Ms Aquino continue to be offered all around the country, notably at the Edsa Shrine, the site of the People Power Revolt of which Cory is its enduring symbol.

At Edsa a plea for miracle; Palace holds Mass for Cory

By TJ Burgonio and Fe Zamora

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ADDED its own prayers for the healing of former President Corazon Aquino, whom her spokesperson described as unable but "weak."

President Macapagal-Arroyo led other government officials including Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and most of the members of her Cabinet in a Mass held at the Palace's Ceremonial Hall at 10 a.m. A number of Aquino's relatives were also in attendance.

At the Our Lady Queen of Peace chapel on Edsa, Quezon City, which stands where ordinary Filipinos around-the-clock prayers stopped mil-

AT EDSA: A7

SWS: 60% of Filipinos have much trust in Cory

By Kaze Pedroso
Inquirer Research

MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS CONTINue to trust former President Corazon Aquino, according to the Social Weather Stations.

The latest SWS survey showed that three in every five adult Filipinos had "much trust" in Aquino, with public trust highest in Mindanao and among the upper-middle class.

Public trust in the former President was higher among women and younger groups, according to the First Quarter 2009 Social Weather survey.

It found that 60 percent of adult Filipinos nationwide had "much trust" in Aquino, while 21 percent had "little trust," for a "good" net trust rating of +39.

The net trust rating is the difference between the percentage of those who said they had much trust in Aquino and the percentage of those who said they had little trust in her. The net rating is correctly rounded.

Net trust ratings of +50 and above are considered "very good," between +30 and +49, "good," between +10 and +29, "moderate,"

SWS: A7

Homicide not ruled out in Jackson's death

LOS ANGELES—THE PROBE INTO Michael Jackson's death was stepped up on Thursday, as investigators subpoenaed medical records and a leading police officer refused to rule out homicide.

Coroners called for any records held by Jackson's many doctors to be preserved "including radiology and psychiatric records," the Los Angeles Times reported, part of an ongoing investigation into the singer's death at aged 50 on June 25.

Los Angeles police chief Bill Bratton said his department was looking into Jackson's "prescription drug history, [and] the doctors that he's dealt with over the years."

"Are we dealing with homicide? Are we dealing with an accidental overdose? What are we dealing with? So as we are standing here speaking, I am

HOMICIDE: A13

AFP lowers Metro alert to 'blue'

By Jocelyn R. Uy, TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

THE MILITARY COMMAND FOR METRO MANILA yesterday lowered its alert level in the metropolis from a maximum "red" to "blue" and Malacañang said the reason for the downgrade was that a reported bomb threat from Islamist radicals was neither imminent nor serious.

The military decision to scale down the alert level came after Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. ordered the Armed Forces to stop talking publicly about bomb threats and leave official pronouncements on sensitive security matters to the civilian-led Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC).

The furor over the security situation in the capital coincided with opposition allegations that Malacañang had drawn up a bomb-scare scenario to justify a declaration of martial law by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Mala-

AFP LOWERS: A13

POLICE VISIBILITY Police flag down motorists along C-5 Road, Kalayaan Avenue in Barangay East Rembo, Makati City at midnight, Thursday. Police have downgraded their alert status to "blue."

Mayon acting up anew; alert level 2 raised

By Alexis Papa and Rey M. Nasol
Inquirer Southern Luzon

MT. MAYON, THE COUNTRY'S MOST active volcano, is rumbling and could erupt again soon, volcanologists warned yesterday as they raised the alert level status around the 2,460-meter mountain from one (low-level unrest) to two (moderate unrest).

This means that the volcano is in a state of increasing unrest, which could lead to ash explosions and eventual eruption, the Philippine Institute of

MAYON ALERT: A6

FALLING LEAVES Ateneo de Manila University students Timothy Hiatbo (left) and Karl Sandejon (right) pose with a giant check representing their prize of HK$100,000 (P620,000) for winning "Best of the Best" awards in the HSBC Young Entrepreneur Awards at a reception at the Peninsula Manila hotel on Friday. They won over 2,400 competitors from 6 Asian countries with their business plan: Eco leaves that have fallen from the coconut tree as raw materials for plates and food containers. (Story in Super Lifestyle, Page D1.) — Dixie L. Locsin

Burying a child one bone at a time

TUZLA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVina—How many times can you bury your child without going mad?

It's a question that has haunted hundreds of Bosnian mothers facing an agonizing dilemma: As researchers identify remains scattered around mass graves from the Srebrenica massacre, do they bury the first few bones as soon potentially years for a skeleton to come together?

Many choose to bury whatever fragments turn up first. Then another bone is found and they have to reopen the grave. Months later researchers find another piece, and then another—and

BURYING: A3

If this is cyber war, US has few options for counterstrike

WASHINGTON—A LOT OF PEOPLE are saying this is cyber war. But if the latest attack on United States websites was an assault by North Korea or some other foreign government, what good responses are in America's arsenal?

"The short answer is probably 'Not a heck of a lot,'" says James Lewis, a se-

(See related story on Page A19.)

nior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Defense and cyber analysts said Thursday that chances are high that very little eventually will be done to whoever orchestrated several days of

IT THREAT: A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas, Mindanao, Southern Luzon and the western sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rain. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies and isolated rains.

Metro Manila	Mostly Cloudy	Kalibo/Boracay	Mostly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Roxas	Mostly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Iloilo	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Cabanatuan	Mostly Cloudy	Ozamiz	Mostly Cloudy
Iba/Subic	Mostly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Mostly Cloudy	Cotabato	Mostly Cloudy
Legaspi	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Catarman	Mostly Cloudy	Puerto Prin.	Mostly Cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

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6/42 (draw date: July 8, 2009): 28 31 30 7

SUERTRES (draw date: July 10, 2009): 1 7 4

FOUR DIGIT (draw date: July 10, 2009): 6 1 5 6

7 1 4

9 3 8

MEGALOTTO 6/45 (draw date: July 8, 2009): 2 3 4 10 16 45

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Gas tax hike untimely–Teves

By Gabriel Cardenas
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE Department of Finance is seriously studying a World Bank recommendation for the government to raise the excise tax on gasoline to boost its revenues, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said here on Friday.

But he said this was not the right time to increase the excise tax on gasoline. "We are now in difficult times and in fact, we did not propose it to Congress," said Teves, who was guest in a meeting of assessors and treasurers in the Ilocos region.

The Department of Finance earlier urged Congress to increase the excise tax on tobacco and alcohol, saying the law needs to be instituted to align tax rates with rising living standards.

"But we'll study that [WB recommendation] and maybe, when we're convinced that we need to add, maybe, we would implement it at the proper time," he said.

Quarterly update

In its latest quarterly update, the World Bank had suggested to the government to increase the excise tax on gasoline "to ensure quality implementation of the fiscal stimulus package."

The bank had noted that for an oil-importing country, petroleum products in the Philippines are lightly taxed by international standards.

But Teves said although the Philippines has the lowest tax rate compared to other countries, "we should also be looking at the per-capita income of our people compared to those that the World Bank had cited."

Although petroleum products have big contributions to national revenue, there are other ways to increase it and reduce the country's deficit, he said.

He admitted that his office has been having difficulty in meeting its revenue collection target because of the global financial crisis that has affected the country.

Lower than target

"So, all in all, because of slowdown in the economy, compared to what we have previously projected, we now have a lower collection in relation to our target," he said.

The deficit as of May this year was P123 billion, which, Teves said, was lower than the P140 billion target.

"We are still on track. Our revised target for this year should not exceed P320 billion," he said.

He said the country could not afford to have a large deficit because of its huge foreign debt. "We might sink deeper in our debt if we increase our deficit," he said.

The country has a Foreign debt of $56 billion. "But I'm saying that despite our situation, we need to look for other ways to collect [more revenues] so that our country will not be hurt," he said.

To do this, he said, congressional support is needed for the so-called revenue-enhancing measures, such as the rationalization of fiscal incentives and the excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol products.

A militant lawmaker yesterday also opposed the proposal of the World Bank to increase taxes on oil products claiming that these would only weigh down consumers already burdened by the oil companies's income profits of as much as P167 million a day.

Amihanan Rep. Joel Maglunsod assured that the MRs proposal to jack up excise taxes would only give oil companies another excuse to increase their prices and "bleed 88 igmos until they die."

Unacceptable

The WB noted that the excise tax on gasoline products had been pegged at P4.20 per liter since 1998, and this has led to the petroleum tax's declining contribution to government revenue collection over the last decade.

But in a statement said Maglunsod the WB proposal was "unacceptable and worsens strong opposition from consumers."

He cited a study by the Ibon Foundation which showed that local pump prices have been increasing much faster than Dubai crude oil from January to March this year.

This has led to an "overprice" that has padded the big three's bottomline—Petron Corp. gets P64.94 million in excess profits a day; Pilipinas Shell with P49.94 million; and Chevron Philippines with P33.55 million, he said. With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TEVES

Erap joins brouhaha over GMA 'boob job'

By Tina G. Santos

WOMEN FOR THE NATIONAL BUREAU of Investigation to step in.

This was the reaction of former President Joseph Estrada to a report that the bureau would investigate who had leaked the story of President Macapagal-Arroyo's breast implants to the media.

"I cannot understand why the NBI is using its resources looking for the doctors who talked about the medical attention given to you-know-who, when there are so many cases of killings, incidents of anthrax transmissions, bombings and other heinous crimes that need to be investigated," Estrada told members of the Manila Medical Society who invited him as guest speaker for its 107th foundation anniversary on Thursday.

"Ang masasabi ko lang, JBL: huwag na nilang pinahihirapan ang mommy ito," he added. (All I can say to the NBI is not to take this seriously)

Quarantine for life

"I hope no doctor in this country is under investigation by the NBI for being talkative and revealing the truth about a very important patient," Estrada, who was recently elected mayor from the crowd composed of doctors and other medical practitioners. "If you are among those identified as the one who talked about implants, I hope you do not get quarantined for life."

Sought for comment, NBI spokesperson Atlan Casuela said the bureau was merely acting on the request of Malacañang to determine the possible administrative liability of any of its employees for the leakage.

During his term as president, he said the state of his health was never made a secret because national security was at stake.

While claiming that the issue was a personal matter, Estrada stressed that the president's health was a public concern.

"Who are they or anyone close to the president to deny her the right to know," he told reporters later? When you're a public official, you lose your privacy. That's public property."

Many spokesmen initially denied the report but later admitted that the President had breast implants done at the 'Wo.

Connected to surgeon Raul Gonzalez was Samuel Pakianathan that Ms. Arroyo underwent breast augmentation surgery at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Muntinlupa City last week. He, however, declined to comment when asked about the reported breast implants.

Jinxy's defense

One of her most vocal critics, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, said the report was a "non-issue."

"Whether she had implants or not is her business and should not even be a topic of discussion," the 27th NBA selection Mvaver said in a statement.

De Venecia said the president's general state of health was the issue, not the issue of implants. "The public has a right to know about her health," he stressed. "She is, after all, the country's chief executive."

The businessman said Mr. Arroyo's friends and relatives should "ignore the rants and rabid remarks" regarding the implants, adding that continuing to make an issue regarding political points over the implants would be unfair for the administration, the opposition and the people.

"I never had any personal animosity towards Mrs. Arroyo," said de Venecia. "If she is not well, I hope she gets better."

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DSWD told to buy food for Mindanao evacuees

By Miko Dizon

SOCIAL WELFARE SECRETARY ESPERANza Cabral yesterday directed its Mindanao regional office to procure food supplies worth P12.3 million to feed hundreds of thousands of evacuees after the United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) suspended its relief operations due to the series of bombings in Mindanao.

"The relief and food assistance for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mindanao will continue even if the UN-WFP announced the suspension of its delivery of food to the evacuees," Cabral said in a statement.

The food supplies should be ready for distribution this month, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) added. The DSWD's Field Office XII was tasked to procure relief.

Cabral earlier said that the government would take over the food relief distribution current run by the World Food Program if in the next two weeks, it would not resume its missions.

The UN agency suspended its operations due to concerns over the safety of its staff after successive bombings rocked Iligan City, Jolo, and Cotabato City.

Cabral said yesterday that the UN's work "complements" the government's relief work for the displaced families through the DSWD.

The DSWD said that UN-WFP commodities were subject to "DSWD endorsement for daily and tax-free entry into the country."

"The relief and food assistance being undertaken by the UN-WFP is implemented under the Emergency Operations Assistance to Conflict-Affected Mindanao (EMOP-ACAM), a joint project of DSWD and UN-WFP" the statement read.

"The UN is not operating independently in their relief operations in Mindanao. In fact, we have dispatched them to undertake the relief and other assistance to the affected areas in Mindanao through a letter of understanding," Cabral explained.

The latest aggression has greatly provoke relief for families displaced by the internal fighting in Mindanao rise from June 2000 to June 2007.

Cabral said that in December last year, the DSWD "worked hard" to extend the World Food Program's operations at the two agencies' contribution to assisting poor in Mindanao "by addressing the food security needs of the people living in the affected areas."

No new cases of swine ebola

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE HOG INDUSTRY AND THE GOVERNment alike assured the public that no new case of Ebola Reston Virus infection in Philippine swine had surfaced, saying a report in a journal cited on Friday was likely referring to the outbreak in December.

International news reports quoted the Science journal's Friday edition as saying that the Reston ebolavirus on Before "has been detected in pigs for the first time."

"We have not received ground reports of any new infection. The article from the scientific journal was probably referring to the outbreak in December last year since journal articles go through a long research process," National Veterinary Quarantine Service Director, Dr. Lorna Velasco said.

Velasco said the agency has been conducting surveillance in swine farms in Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) since the outbreak was reported in December last year.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) director Dr. Nicolas Cachagues confirmed that there was no new swine ebola outbreak.

The BAI was set to test backyard hog farms in 500 barangays across Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) and in Pangasinan province. With reports from Joelle A. Sevilla, Orlando B. Sinay and Grace C. Alfonso Inquirer Mindanao

'NO NEED TO PANIC'

Pagasa: El Niño is coming; crops in peril

By Alcuin Papa

BE PREPARED FOR THE ONSET OF EL NIÑO, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said yesterday.

In its July 2009 weather outlook, Pagasa said the country might experience a transition from El Niño Southern Oscillation (Enso)-neutral conditions in a "weak El Niño."

"A transition from Enso-neutral to El Niño conditions will likely continue in the equatorial Pacific [soon]. Statistical and dynamical models indicate a probability of a weak El Niño to develop in the coming months," the agency said.

50% chance

Pagasa first raised the possibility of the coming of El Niño last month.

Pagasa spokesperson and Deputy Administrator for Operations and Services Nathaniel Cruz told the Inquirer that models by international monitoring agencies indicate an "almost 50 percent chance" of the onset of moderate El Niño conditions.

"We now have to see if we need to panic. El Niño is not like a storm whose effect we can immediately feel. It could take months before we can feel the effects. We have time to plan mitigation measures," he said.

El Niño usually means lack of rainfall and hence tropical cyclones for the Philippines.

Cruz said this would have an effect on sectors that depend on nature like agriculture, energy and even health.

"For the farmers, it is time to plan their planting period, or plans other crops that require less water," he said.

Pagasa, Cruz said, has been meeting monthly and coordinating with other government agencies on mitigation measures against El Niño.

Transition to El Niño

Cruz's statements came after the United States Climate Prediction Center, an office under the the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, said in a monthly report that the equatorial Pacific Ocean has "transitioned ... to El Niño conditions."

According to the center, climatic trends have a "weak-to-moderate strength El Niño" into the northern hemisphere winter of 2009, "with further strengthening possible thereafter."

It also said the sea surface temperature climbed to one degree Celsius above normal along a narrow band in the eastern equatorial Pacific in June.

The Climate Prediction Center also said temperatures in other tropical regions were also above normal, with warmer than-usual readings of as much as 200 meters below the ocean surface.

El Niño is caused by warming of the seas in the Pacific and is associated with increased rainfall across the east-central and eastern Pacific but with drier than normal conditions over northern Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

A literature report said El Niño would pose major problems to wheat production in Australia, affect palm oil output in major producers Malaysia and Indonesia, and hit rice production in the Philippines, the world's biggest importer of the staple.

Storm signals lifted as 'Gorio' veers out of RP

By Alcuin Papa

ALL PUBLIC STORM SIGNALS RAISED IN northern Luzon as a result of tropical depression "Gorio" were lifted by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) late yesterday.

According to its 5 p.m. weather bulletin, the agency said "Gorio" continued to accelerate away from the country.

The weather disturbance was spotted 200 kilometers west of Laoag City moving west at 24 kilometers per hour. It has maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour.

The agency said it expects "Gorio" to enhance the southwest monsoon and bring occasional rains over the western sections of Luzon and Visayas.

As a result, extreme Northern Luzon, including Tuguegarao City, and Laoag City will experience rains with gusty winds. Coastal waters will be moderate to rough.

The rest of the country, including Metro Manila will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming cloudy with widespread rains over the western sections of Central and Southern Luzon and Western Visayas.

By Saturday morning, "Gorio" is expected to be 750 kilometers northwest of Laoag City.

So far, "Gorio" is the seventh weather disturbance to enter the country's area of responsibility this year.

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TAFE NSW Institutes offering Filipino students with the opportunity to study and work in Australia. Diploma of Electronics and Communications offered from July 2009

TAFE NSW Institutes has introduced a new Diploma of Electronics and Communications Engineering that allows Filipino students the opportunity to gain valuable skills and the option to work in Australia. The two-year course will allow students to work in electronic equipment maintenance/installation, an occupation currently in demand in Australia. TAFE NSW Institutes is Australia's largest educational provider and all colleges are government owned and operated.

"TAFE has good quality education in the sense that it gives a solid foundation in practical learning as well as theoretical learning," said Filipino student Kamil Anne who is currently studying at TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute.

The Diploma of Electronics and Communication Engineering is offered at four campuses in Sydney (including Western Sydney campuses) as well as Newcastle campus. Students in this Diploma course will also gain the Certificate 3 in Electronics and Communications. The course includes a 144 hour work placement component. Filipino students who wish to apply for the course must have an Academic IELTS score of 5.5 and completion of Year 12 or equivalent.

"This is a course that will qualify students to work on repairing a broad range of electronic equipment including consumer and professional audio and video equipment," said John Zervos, Head Teacher at Ultimo College. "There is a lot of demand for this type of work in Australia and our students are very successful in finding employment," he said.

Vocational education and training (VET) is the fastest growing education sector for international student students in Australia according to figures released by Australian Education International, a division of the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations. Almost twice as many Filipino students study in vocational institutions compared to universities, with the majority studying in New South Wales.

TAFE NSW, which stands for Technical and Further Education in New South Wales, is Australia's largest education and training provider with 11 institutes and 320 campuses located across Sydney and coastal and inland NSW cities.

The average class size has a maximum ratio of 20:1.Learning takes place in hi-tech venues, with fully equipped, state-of-the-art facilities. Teachers are fully qualified educators and specialists with industry expertise and resources offer a 5-star, client service guiding experience.

Many Australian vocational courses articulate to university courses with credit transfer. TAFE NSW students may also select specific programs which link the TAFE diploma with a bachelor degree so the dual qualifications can be completed in 3 to 3 and-a-half years with the University of Western Sydney, Macquarie University, University of Technology Sydney, La Trobe University (Sydney campus) and the Australian College of Applied Psychology. Students save time and money and graduate with two qualifications which enhances employment options.

TAFE NSW Institutes also offer other courses that meet the skills shortage in Australia. Course areas include: Accounting, Community Welfare, Hairdressing, Horticulture and Fashion Design (shoemaking). TAFE NSW Institutes offer over 2500 certificate, diploma and advanced diploma courses.

Kamil is studying a course that will hopefully allow her to work in Australia. "After TAFE, I am planning on applying for permanent residency and practical what I have learned. I hope to take advantage of the opportunities that the country has to offer for people with a young family like mine," she said.

Cynthia Velasco-Chua from Manila describes completing her Diploma at TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute in 2008. "TAFE NSW was an opportunity of a lifetime. TAFE NSW will help you broaden your horizons on what you can achieve as a student, as well as when you become professional in your field of study," she said.

The Diploma of Electronics and Communications Engineering will be offered in July 2009 and February 2010. Places are limited. For information on all TAFE NSW Institutes, courses and how to apply go to www.studyinstate.edu.au

For further information contact:
Jorge Baron, DET International Students
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Phone: +61 2 9217 6361
Email: jorge.baron@det.nsw.edu.au

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 11, 2009
14th Week in Ordinary Time
Benedict

1st Reading: Gen 49:29-32, 50:15-26a
Gospel: Mt 10:24-33

Jesus said to his apostles, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It should be glad to become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If the head of the family has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of the family! So, do not be afraid of them.

"There is nothing covered that will not be uncovered, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. What I say in telling you in the dark, you must speak in the light. What you hear in private, proclaim from the housetops.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but have no power to kill the soul. Rather be afraid of him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid: you are worth much more than many sparrows.

Whoever acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven. Whoever rejects me before others I will reject before my Father in heaven."

Commentary:

At the end of his life, Jacob blessed his progeny according to the blessings God intended to be conveyed to them. He spoke about the promise of land. After Joseph's death, the children of Israel left that land. When he had finished his blessing, he finally gave up his spirit into the hand of God. Then, when Joseph saw his own death approaching, he also completed his people with the consolation of their return to Canaan.

The deaths of these two eminent patriarchs were truly excellent. Both favored or with strong encouragement or promises in the service of God. Since death is seen as another form required by God, we shall meet Him who is the strength of our heart; if God's people are not people, death will prefer us to them. Under the care of God, we shall look nothing for help or need. We shall remain immersed until our work is finished. Then, when we finally meet God face to face with hands, we shall depart in peace and leave a blessing for our children after us.

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3 Pinoys seized off Cameroon

YAOUNDE—THREE FILIPINOS AND TWO Ukrainians have been seized from a trawler off the Cameroon coast, a source close to maritime agencies into the abductions said Thursday.

The same source said a Cameroon newspaper had previously said the five abductees on Monday were all Chinese.

"After verification, it turns out that the hostages are not of Chinese nationality. There are Filipinos and Ukrainians (and the sailors) are Ukrainians and northern," said the source, asking for anonymity, as a group that was allowed to visit the hostages.

Several armed groups operate in waters off the Bakassi peninsula in southern Cameroon, which is potentially rich in oil and natural gas resources, as well as fish stocks.

Cameroonian officials on Thursday declined to comment on the affair, saying only that they were still gathering further information.

Le Jour newspaper had previously said the five men were Chinese and had probably been taken by Nigerian rebels, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). MEND has denied any part in the affair.

In the past year, there has been an increase in sea attacks off the Bakassi peninsula.

In March, an oil server employee were kidnapped off Bakassi by two different groups. Four hostages were still in the hands of the captors on Tuesday, according to Le Jour. AFP

Guillermo R. Ramos, 78

GUILLERMO "EMONG" DEL ROSARIO-Ramos is died on July 6. He was 78.

He is survived by his wife Julie; children Evelyn, Gloria and Jojo, and their families. His body lies at the family residence at 4651 E. Legaspi Street, Ugong, Pasig City.

Interment will be on July 12 at Pasig Catholic Cemetery.

Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FOR PEACE!

"They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, no longer will they learn how to make war." (Isaiah 2.4)

We, the one thousand two hundred seventy-two member schools, colleges and universities of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), are deeply disturbed about the bombings that hit Cotabato City, Jolo, Iligan City and Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte this week killing and injuring scores of people.

We condemn these atrocities in no uncertain terms.

The people of Mindanao are once again asking questions and grappling for solutions that address the issue of peace and security. These bombings cannot be understood outside of the broader issues involving the stalled peace process.

We are in solidarity, in prayer and in action, with the victims of the bombings, their families and loved ones and all those whose dream of peace has been shattered by these acts of violence.

We call upon the national leadership and concerned local authorities to act swiftly and restore the peace and security of places afflicted with violence and to bring the perpetrators of violence to the bar of justice.

We urge the national leadership, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the indigenous peoples in Mindanao to go back to the negotiating table to explore again the path to peace.

We call on the media to handle responsibly the information given them so that the people will be informed properly of the events and issues involved.

We call for sobriety on the part of our citizens, organized groups from the government and private sectors. Let us be one in our resolve to promote genuine peace in Mindanao.

We call our member schools and all men and women of good will to continue creating "circles of discernment" in the context of the unfolding events and in light of the Social Teachings of the Church.

We request the regions to take active steps in the building and promotion of peace in their respective spheres of learning. We ask that we remain vigilant in our desire to uphold peace.

In this year dedicated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, we remain steadfast in our desire to bring about a culture of life and peace.

Finally, let us turn to prayer for the loving protection and guidance of our God, to our Lord who is Prince of Peace. http://www.ceap.org.ph and http://reinvention.ceap.org.ph

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Chairperson
Superintendent, Commission

Burying a child one bone at a time

Srebrenica (A1)

Bosnian Serb forces overran a UN-protected safe haven during the 1992-95 Bosnian war.

July 11 anniversary

Newly identified Srebrenica victims are usually buried on a memorial center mark year on the July 11 anniversary of the start of the 1995 massacre, Europe's worst slaughter of civilians since World War II. After the bloodshed—classified by the United Nations as a genocide—troops led by Gen. Ratko Mladic scattered the bodies in dozens of mass graves that still were spreading.

Six years after a DNA lab took a drop of blood from Hafiz Ismic, researchers called him to say they had made a positive identification.

It completed a nine-cycle of anguish.

The man at the lab said they had found 90 percent of her husband's body. His bones had been dispersed among four different mass graves.

DNA analysis

"And the children?" Ismic recalled asking. "The men were silent, and I knew something was wrong."

She was told there was one man or one of his boys but a small part of the other had been found. The problem was DNA analysis could not determine which one he was.

"I couldn't breathe," she said. "I couldn't speak."

Now, she cannot bury the precious fragment, for what would the government say—Srebrenica, 1992-1995? or Srebrenica Mass, 1977-2005?

"Brother is now waiting for brother," she said.

The ICMP established in 1996 at the urging of former President Bill Clinton, has collected 87,049 blood samples from relatives of the missing, has analyzed them DNA profiles and is now matching them with DNA profiles removed from the 29,203 bone samples that have been exhumed.

Largest ID program

ICMP grew into the world's largest DNA-assisted identification program and so far investigators have helped identify 12,516 individuals in Bosnia. Out of these, 6,185 are Srebrenica victims.

The agency also carries out work in Chile, Iraq, Colombia, Norway, Kuwait, and the Philippines. It helped identify victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the remains of those who died in the 2004 Asian tsunami. But Bosnia remains its biggest operation.

MOSSAT FORENSIC PUZZLE
A Bosnian man who lost his relatives in the Srebrenica massacre (4 years ago of over 8,000 men and boys) talks to a forensics expert (right) in an attempt to identify his relatives in a village near the eastern Bosnian town of Visegrad. (© Ian Evans/Sarajevo, Bosnia)

During the war, the United Nations declared Srebrenica, besieged by Serbs throughout the conflict, a protected area for civilians. When Mladic's troops overran the enclave, people flocked to the UN base in the suburb of Potocari for protection.

Outnumbered Dutch UN troops never fired a shot. They watched troops round up the entire population, and take the men and boys away to be shot.

Satellite photos

After the massacre, UN Secretary of State Madeleine Albright turned satellite photos of mass grave sites at Security Council members. Washington knew what had happened and where the mass graves were, she told them.

Serb troops indeed to the sites with bulldozers and started victims to other locations—now called 'secondary' mass graves—to conceal evidence of war crimes. As the machines plowed up bodies, they ripped them apart and now fragments of the same person can be scattered among several sites.

The ICMP found "one man in five different locations who came to us in 11 different body bags," says the head of the Sarajevo-based organization, Kathryn Bomberger. She believes the enormous cover-up should be considered another war crime.

Nightmare

One thing is certain: It created a forensic nightmare right from the start. "This is the biggest forensic puzzle that exists anywhere in the world," Bomberger said.

Over a decade ago, when ICMP began its work in Bosnia, most pathologists, anthropologists and those in the forensic community said, quite simply, that what they were trying to do was impossible.

Nobody in the world had ever tried to find, retrieve, identify and in many cases reassemble so many sets of remains—and then return them to families. Slowly however, the researchers have made progress.

At the ICMP Podrinje Identification Project in Tuzla, 70 kilometers northeast of Srebrenica, one manager Emina Kurtagic probes a heavy morgue door to reveal racks of blue and white body bags.

870 trays

The 870 trays in the aisles were built to accommodate one body each. Instead, they hold a total of 1,300 bags, each with a few bones of one or more victims waiting to be identified and reassembled.

Remains of one of Habibi's sons are probably in here somewhere and soon'll be among the 600 victims to be buried at this July's memorial.

Almost 11,000 bags passed through this room in the past decade," Kurtagic said. "Today we just loaded 302 fairly complete and identified bodies on the truck. These will be buried this year in Potocari and it's just part of this year's delivery."

In another facility, Cheryl Katzmarzyk, a senior forensic anthropologist, is trying to solve hundreds of other human jigsaw puzzles. She is running a department established to deal with the worst cases—those scattered over multiple sites.

Missing head

On one table is a nearly complete skeleton. Just the head is missing. The one on the other table has only five bones.

"This one is more common," Katzmarzyk said. "Here are have approximately 30 percent of the skeleton of this man recovered. In fact, he was found in two different graves, his arm was found in one, his lower body, his legs, were found in another, mixed up within that grave."

Mladic, indicted for genocide, is still in hiding, apparently somewhere in Serbia. Recently, television channels aired videos southeast by Serbian police in one of his hideouts. They showed him dancing, singing at parties and cuddling his grandchild.

"Mladic is holding his grandchildren in his arms at a birthday party. And how do we feel?" Mazic said bitterly.

It is hard to imagine anybody would envy Habiba.

Mazic, but Rahmin Bahia does.

The 68-year-old's husband was killed early in the war. Serbs caught her only son, Nedzo, 17, when he tried to escape from Srebrenica. A massacre survivor told her Nedzo was one of the first to be shot. His body was never found.

Nearly 6-foot-5

Habiba returned to her previous home near Srebrenica to be where the dates lived together.

"That's where they walked, where they worked. That's where I went to walk," she said.

When neighbors see her wandering around the house and the garden all day, "They say, you really woah are crazy. But I'm not alone, I tell them. The two are with me and are helping me."

Habiba can't sleep at night. No medication helps. Often she visits a neighbor's house, where her son's friend lived and where Nedzo once measured how tall he grew. He goes there just to look at the line carved in the wood of the doorway. He continues, or nearly 6-foot-5.

Customarily, she thanks her mobile phone.

"Every time it rings, I think they are calling me to say they found him ... even one bone," she said. AP

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P7.2-B poll deal signed; no TRO from SC

From page A1

day by the Concerned Citizens' Movement (CCM) seeking a temporary restraining order, but the Supreme Court did not stop the signing of the contract to automate the 2010 elections.

But remedies remain available to the CCM because its arguments will be taken up during the tribunal's oral hearing on Tuesday, according to Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez.

The CCM, led by law professor and administration critic Harry Roque, sought to stop the signing of the contract because it believes that the agreement is "misguided and ill-conceived" and in violation of the automated election law (Republic Act No. 9369).

In a statement issued yesterday, the CCM said it had filed the petition "out of a strong sense of public duty."

"We will remain vigilant and we will not give up until we've exhausted every legal option," it said. "Let it be said that we exercise our duty during the dark hours of this nation."

In full blast

Flanked by Comelec commissioners and officials and executives of Smartmatic and Total and its local partner TIM (Total Information Management), Melo said: "This contract is signed because the Comelec and the joint venture mul also signed separately by Smartmatic and TIM answering for joint and several liabilities."

Melo said the commission officials said preparations for next year's presidential and national automated elections were now in full blast.

By computerizing the balloting and the counting of the votes, complete results will be known in a day or two, lowering the window for electoral fraud and minimizing protests, the Comelec said.

Officials of Smartmatic and TIM, who had previously traded over power- and risk-sharing in the transaction, shook hands and hugged after the signing of the contract.

Pedro Arroyo, Smartmatic chief finance officer and Salvador Arque, TIM senior vice president (not in photo). AP/A.M.

Trouble now on, we are no longer part of the Comelec," Smartmatic TIM spokesperson Cesar Flores said. "We are not a vendor, we are a provider. We will follow Comelec instructions on how to proceed."

Said TIM senior vice president Jolindo Arque: "We feel honored, humbled and privileged to be given this opportunity to be a part of this historic undertaking. Rest assured that we will do our best to have fast and clean elections in 2010."

Timelines

Marquez told the Inquirer yesterday afternoon that with no TRO from the Supreme Court, "the Comelec may proceed at its own discretion."

Melo said the Comelec would not wait for the high court to decide on the merits of the CCM petition.

"This is not the top urgent project, or a construction project. We have to meet the timelines. We cannot postpone the elections," he said.

Melo pointed out that the Comelec has tied the bidding for the project—which has a budget of P11.2 billion...on May 6.

The delays brought by the complexities of the bidding process and the responses had business Smartmatic and TIM were indebted to pay the poll body P1 million a month behind on original schedule.

The consortium was formalized by the Securities and Exchange Commission only this week.

"The process really took quite a while, but we remain today a unified," Melo said.

He said other groups could ask the high court to nullify the contract. "Until we will be ready to face this challenge."

Notice to proceed

With the contract signed, the Comelec is expected to issue to the consortium the notice to proceed by Monday.

Upon receipt of the notice, the consortium will start the acquisition of the materials needed to manufacture the machines, Flores said.

He said the next few weeks would be very busy for the Comelec and the consortium as they would have to meet each other's project management team and discuss and assign responsibilities.

"We have to start at full speed. We have people working for weeks on this project ... The next phase is the overall understanding of the project, and setting goals and deliverables for short and medium terms," he said.

Flores said that starting next week, the consortium would hire more people for its project management team, and would confer with its subcontractors for the other parts of the automated elections project.

He said the manufacture of the voting and counting machines in Taiwan could start by September.

Smartmatic TIM is mandated to deliver the machines—a total of 81,200 are needed—to the Comelec saying November.

Flores said the assembly line could make 1,000 machines daily.

If the Comelec demands it, the assembly can double the production, he said.

13 milestones

Comelec legal chief Sheriff Vairand Balweza said the poll body had set 13 "milestones" for Smartmatic TIM to meet.

Payments will be made every time the consortium meets these milestones, and the last payment of about P1 billion will be after the elections, he said.

Despite the shortened timeline, Flores said the consortium was "confident" that it would be able to meet the deliverables set by the Comelec.

The CCM's Roque was unperturbed that the contract signing had proceeded as scheduled.

"Implementation can still be restrained. In the Mega Battle-dore [case], we restrained payment [of] a contract. The contract was unsalted even after payment," Roque told the Inquirer.

"To any case, let it not be said that we did not warn against automated failure of elections and automated cheating. We filled the case out of a strong sense of public duty, we will remain vigilant and we will not give up until we've seen the case through," he said.

AT LAST Comelec Chair Jose Melo (right) and Jose Vibs, board chair of Smartmatic TIM joint venture group, seal the poll automation deal during a pending petition by a group of lawyers to stop the signing of the P7.2-billion contract. Waiting for their turn to affix their signatures are Antonio Tuvera, Smartmatic chief finance officer and Salvador Arque, TIM senior vice president (not in photo). AP/A.M.

GMA accused of striking deal with drug firms

From page A1

Affordable Medicines, which he chairs, "to shed light on her confidential meeting with representatives of multinational drug companies on July 6."

Drilon also named seven officials of drug manufacturers' trade groups Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines as the Dr. Pro Managing Managerial National Center for Geriatric Health inside the Malacañang complex.

'Voluntary compliance'

The meeting was held at the multinational companies' request, and after the President impressed the generic center on Wednesday afternoon.

During the meeting, Ferdie and Duque said they explained the provisions of the Cheaper Medicines Law, while the officials of the companies denied their position.

Ferdie admitted asking the companies if they were open to the idea of "voluntary compliance" and suggested that they draft a letter of undertaking (LOU) stating their commitment to trade prices by 50 percent or more.

The companies agreed and promised to deliver the LOU after 10 days, or by July 16, he said.

"So we won't have the 10 [on the maximum retail price list] because they will voluntarily comply with the law," Ferdie said.

Duque said he is confident Mr. Arroyo would sign the IRR if the companies' compliance was not satisfactory.

"There's no concession because it's clear that the President's order is for them to bring down the prices of drugs and medicines by 50 percent or more," he said.

Duque said he wasn't aware that Romulo had brokered the meeting.

Romy said there might be conflict of interest on the part of Romulo, who he said chaired the Zuellig Pharma Phil., which controls about 60 percent of the wholesale pharmaceutical market in the country.

In a statement, Romulo, chair of the Zuellig Family Foundation, not Zuellig Pharma, said that imposing price controls on a limited number of medicines "sends the wrong message to the international business community regarding the commitment of our nation to a free market economy and its effective legal property rights and will discourage job-producing foreign direct investment."

He said the right way to bring down the cost of all medicines, not just the 22 on the MOP list, is by promoting the "increased manufacture and sale of generic drugs and working with pharmaceutical companies to get them to substantially reduce the price of drugs to manufacture generics in the Philippines."

22 drugs at half price

A draft for an executive order setting the MRP for the 22 most prescribed drugs, slashing their prices by half, was submitted by Duque to Malacañang last June 30.

Romas said he was informed by very reliable sources that during the "closed-door meeting," it was agreed that the implementation of the MRP on drugs would be postponed.

"In exchange, big pharma companies will devise a way to lower the prices of medicines under the finest of the Senior Address of President Arroyo on July 27," Romas said.

Romas said the President should appear and explain before his oversight committee why she has refused to implement a vital provision of the Cheaper Medicines Law.

It was not clear what Romas hoped to achieve by making a show of summoning Mr. Arroyo when a sitting President, being the head of a coequal branch of government, cannot be summoned by any legislative body although her officials' appearance would be compulsory.

Duque and Ferdie confirmed that the President met with officials of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines as the Dr. Pro Managing Managerial National Center for Geriatric Health inside the Malacañang complex.

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Mayon acting up anew; alert level 2 raised

From page A1

Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said in a bulletin issued early yesterday.

Residents were reminded not to venture into a "permanent danger zone" or in an alternative radius from the volcano's center.

The zone was extended to seven kilometers on the volcano's southeast flank because of the threat from sudden explosions and rockfalls.

Phivolcs also said that rivers and other areas that flow lower prone to the southeast sector should also be avoided, particularly when there is heavy and prolonged rainfall.

The cone-shaped volcano in Albay province has been showing increased activity since June, and early this week volcanologists began closely monitoring Mayon when it began producing steam and a strong glow at the summit crater could be seen with the naked eye.

Glow at crater

Phivolcs said the frequency of volcanic earthquakes on Mayon has increased. This could indicate the movement of magma below the surface that could lead to ash explosions and eventually to a hazardous magmatic eruption, it said.

The increased frequency of low-level volcanic quakes had produced around the crater lip, a cone-shaped pile of hot, steaming rock rocks, possibly remnants from previous eruptions which could fall down the side of the glow as the crater, Phivolcs said.

Phivolcs said the present unrest could be in the same level as when a phreatic (steam-driven) explosion occurred in August 2008.

It said the glow at the summit crater was observed until could now be observed from the Lignon Hill Observatory without the aid of telescopes.

Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum said the immediate danger if volcanic activity escalates was of ash explosions that could affect aviation at the Legazpi airport or result roads of nearby towns.

48 eruptions

Mayon has erupted 48 times since records began, most recently in 2006. A major eruption in 1814 buried the town of Cagsawa.

The volcano spewed ash and lava from July to October 2008, sending about 20,000 people away from homes.

Typhoons triggered mudslides along Mayon's slopes buried scores villages in Daraga, Albay in 2006, killing more than 1,000 people.

In a text message, Albay Gov. Joey Salceda said the province was preparing in the face of the disturbing conditions of Mayon.

He said concerned agencies would start updating the data on the population at risk and critical resources of cities and municipalities around the volcano.

Regular bulletins

He said his people are working on the telecommunications companies to expedite the hotline application for the Phivolcs observatory at Lignon Hill to regular bulletins can be released to media outfits.

"We also have to evaluate communication and warning capacities and maintain media relations and review contingency plans and update urban community," Salceda said.

Cedric Daep, director of the Albay Provincial Safety and Emergency Management Office (Apemo), said the provincial government has been issuing official advisories based on the Phivolcs warnings.

He said the Apemo was now in the process of assessing the population at risk to prepare them in case an evacuation is ordered. with AFP and AP

If this is cyber war, US has few options to counter attack

From page A1

attacks against websites including the White House and Pentagon as well as sites in South Korea. That's largely because the investigation is unlikely to figure out who did it.

Not warlike sanctions

But even if it's determined that another nation was behind the attacks, the possible responses are hardly warlike: trade sanctions, diplomatic protests or a complaint before the United Nations.

"You could start an attaché, recall your ambassador and throw out their ambassador," Lewis said. That's not possible with North Korea, he noted of a state unpopular in the attacks, since Pyongyang doesn't have an embassy in the United States.

But won't Military action? So one is talking about that. Any response needs to fit the crime, analysts said, and this doesn't meet the threshold of an act of war.

"I don't think this kind of attack merits the use of force," said Kim in Lord, national security expert at the Center for a New American Security.

Tit for tat?

"It's annoying, a little embarrassing, but it's not a big deal," Lewis said, meaning that no major damage was done.

But other think retaliation might be called for, strong enough to send a stiff message, perhaps even a similar dose of the US military's secret offensive cyber-capabilities.

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US officials routinely refuse to talk about their secretive computer defenses or computer attacks. Americas might have launched. But US offensive cyber retaliation could range from a passive intimation such as throwing in on a foe's communications to an attack that cripples an enemy's air defense system or shuts the way for a bomber attack.

A counterstrike on an attacker's computer network could be launched, Lewis said, but it would be extremely difficult.

"This is a gray area," said Stewart Baker, who worked on cyber security in the Department of Homeland Security. "But if you know that the North Koreans were doing this, then in a minimum I would have thought you'd be entitled to do the same thing to them to show that you didn't like it."

Measured response

If the attacks caused harm to anyone "you get more serious, and more drinking and talking about it as an act of war or at least more aggressive evidence," said Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution.

Though the recent computer attacks are considered by many cyber experts to be little more than a nuisance to public websites, the incident raised some old anxieties that the US government's policies on cyber warfare are shrouded in secrecy, ill-formed and require broad public debate.

"There's a lot of thinking that needs to be done about how to respond to attacks like this and what the threshold is for responding to cyber attacks, with other means, whether they be economic sanctions or even military force," Lord said.

100,000 'zombies'

The assault involved more than 100,000 "zombie" computers, used by someone without their owners' knowledge and linked together in a network known as a "botnet." Most of those computers were in South Korea, but others were in Japan, China, the United States and possibly other countries.

"If you share limit as the computers that actually launched the attack, then you're hitting third parties who probably don't even know they were involved," Lewis said.

"And if you go out over the networks to strike back at Pyongyang, how can you be sure you're not accidentally going to also take down Japan or the same time?"

Said Lewis: "You could end up shooting the wrong guy." AP

SWS: 60% of Filipinos have much trust in Cory

From page A1

from +9 to -9, "neutral," -10 to -29, "poor," -30 to -49, "bad," and -50 or lower, "very bad," SWS explained.

Traditionally positive

"Aquino's net trust rating has been traditionally very positive, ranging from moderate +34 to very good +65 (from September 1989 to September 2000)," SWS said in a statement released yesterday.

SWS also noted that Aquino's existing "awesome" (monthly average) turnover (November 2000 and November 2002), before "recovering to moderate" in March 2003.

"Her net trust ratings have since been at level +20s and above, ranging from moderate +20 to November 2005 to her highest rating of very good +30 in March 2008," SWS added.

Mindanao trusts Aquino

In Mindanao, Aquino had a "good" net trust rating of +49, with 68 percent saying they had much trust, and 19 percent saying they had little trust, in the Visayas, Aquino had +37 (62 percent much trust, 25 percent little trust), while in Luzon outside Metro Manila, the score +34 (55 percent much trust, 21 percent little trust). In Metro Manila, 55 percent also said they had much trust in her, while 21 percent said they had little trust, for a good net rating of +34.

Across socioeconomic classes, trust in the former President was highest among members of class ABC at +49 (62 percent much trust, 13 percent little trust), while among class D it was at +38 (60 percent much trust, 21 percent little trust, narrowly rounded). Aquino scored +35 (59 percent much trust, 24 percent little trust) among class E.

Women, too

Among women, public trust in Aquino was higher at +43 (62 per cent much trust, 19 percent little trust), compared to men, among whom she scored net +35 (57 percent much trust, 24 percent little trust).

Across age groups, trust in the former President is strongest among those aged between 35 and 54 (net +46, 64 percent much trust, 19 percent little trust), next among those between aged 18 and 24 (net +43, 64 percent much trust, 19 percent little trust), and those between aged 25 and 44 (net +40, 60 percent much trust, 20 percent little trust).

Aquino had a net trust rating of +31 among those between aged 45 and 54 (55 percent much trust, 23 percent little trust, correctly rounded), and +30 among those aged 55 and above (55 percent much trust, 25 percent little trust).

The survey was conducted from Feb. 26 to Feb. 23, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults in Metro Manila, Luzon outside Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points.

HOME PRAYERS from (left) Vice President Noli de Castro, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Cristina Ponce Enrile, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Visayas Gerry Ki, chair of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

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At Edsa a plea for miracle

From page A1

fancy cards and toppled Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship in February 1986, a call for a miracle for Aquino was made.

"The Edsa Shrine is holy ground," said Msgr. Gerardo Santos, the president of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP). "We are now calling for a miracle from the Lord for Tita Cory. And may the Lord grant us our simple prayers, because we love President Cory."

"We add our prayers to Elena (of) the countless people who love and care for her," Fr. Aaron Lagasca, who celebrated the Mass with four other priests, said in his homily.

"We add our prayers as (many) love us, worthy [they are], acknowledging, of course, that Cory Aquino is more prayerful than many of us," he said.

Lagasca said that when faced with illness, all the faithful could do was "believe that God is merciful and loving."

"He knows what is best for our Former President," Lagasca said, adding:

"Cory Aquino is a woman of faith and courage. We are confident that the Lord will never abandon her and, in fact, has never abandoned her.

"In our reading today of the Gospel, we have heard that whoever holds out in the end will escape death. This is what we firmly believe in. Whoever is faithful to God in the end shall escape death."

Grateful for prayers

Aquino, 76, was diagnosed with colon cancer last year and has been confined at the Makati Medical Center since June 25 for loss of appetite.

She was informed of the Mass in Malacañang, her spokesperson Jimmy Bitanga told reporters after the Mass.

"She's still weak but she knows; she's aware. She's apprised of who initiates Masses and novenas," Bitanga said.

Aquino's children were invited to the Mass but decided to stay with their mother at the hospital, according to Bitanga.

"They are always grateful for all the prayers that are offered for their mother. So I guess they're also grateful that the Presidente and the Cabinet put aside the affairs of the state to ... be united in prayer," she said.

Bitanga also said Aquino's condition had somewhat improved: "According to Kuffy Lupa, her nephew and executive director of the Aquino foundation ... she's been able to take some of the milkshake offered her. I guess that's a positive impression."

Offering

Ms Bitanga, together with Aquino nieces Jose Lupita Kashiwahara and niece Chita Cojuangco, took part in the offertory.

Bitanga-led "Tingting" Cojuangco and former Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta, both sisters-in-law of Aquino and both officials of the Arroyo administration, also attended the Mass.

Said Oreta: "Nagsisi bombarding lagi na sya and nothing bad for (the) healing (for Cory) is very welcome. We're very hopeful. It seems the whole country is praying for her recovery."

The Mass was held a day after the end of the nine-day bonding novena for Aquino at the Greenhills 5 chapel in Mandaue City. It is the second Mass for Aquino in Mandaluyong, after the thanksgiving Mass for her successful colon operation in May.

Aquino has been a vocal critic of the administration since she joined calls for the Arroyo's resignation at the height of the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal in mid-2005.

On holy ground

The CEAP counts as members 1,272 Catholic schools, colleges and universities nationwide. The Mass it offered was attended by Aquino's daughter Pilar Aquino Ong and granddaughter Ina, who came with her classmates from the nearby Poveda School.

In a statement distributed after the Mass, the CEAP, along with the Manila Archdiocesan and Parochial Schools Association and the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations, said they were "all lifted by (the Filipino people's) debt of gratitude to President Cory."

"(Her) spiritual and moral leadership was the lessons that united the Filipino people against a dictatorship. She restored our democratic institutions and governed with integrity and courage," they said.

"Even beyond her service to the country as its highest official, President Cory's example of faith, strength and selflessness continues to be the Filipino people's guiding light. Those who serve in government would do well to follow (her) example."

How it began

Aquino was thrust into the limelight in August 1983 when her husband, opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., was shot dead in the international airport in Manila upon arrival from exile in the United States.

Ninoy Aquino's assassination sparked widespread street protests that ultimately led to a clamor for his widow to challenge the dictator.

Mass two weeks after the snap presidential election called by Marcos, then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and then Constabulary chief Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos withdrew from the Marcos government and threw their support behind Aquino.

They said Aquino was cheated in the election.

For four days in February 1986, the people engaged Marcos' armed forces in dramatic but bloodless confrontations on the corner of Edsa and Ortigas, where now stands the Edsa Shrine.

At the end, the Marcoses fled Malacañang and were flown to Hawaii in the United States, and Aquino took power as President.

Related Mass. Mrs. Ramon Mitra, who joined the military breakaway from Marcos, said the people gathered to Edsa "because they believed that Cory was cheated in the election."

"President Cory was the rallying point of Edsa '86. She is the living symbol of that revolution," Mitra said after yesterday's Mass.

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OPINION

Incomplete victory

THE WAR IS FAR FROM WON, BUT THE GOVERNment scored its biggest victory against drug trafficking when the Pasig Regional Trial Court sentenced to life imprisonment Anna Isaza Borotong, the most notorious drug lord since Jose "Dio Pepe" Oyson was killed in March 1993. On Wednesday, Judge Abraham B. Borotong found Borotong and his wife Sheryl guilty of maintaining the "shabu clanggat" in Pasig City which the police estimated to have netted more than P800 million in profits in just one year.

EDITORIAL

In what the Philippine National Police described as the largest anti-drug operation ever, 150 policemen and agents from the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Special Action Force raided the 2,000-sq m shanty-town on Feb. 10, 2006 and arrested 300 people, including 50 women and children. The raiding team found drug paraphernalia, packs of shabu powder and plastic bags filled with peso bills and coins in almost all of the 40 shanties inside the compound. Borotong and his wife were not caught during the raid; they were arrested by NBI operatives nine months later, on Nov. 21, 2006, in Makati. He was using the name Johnny Dizon and had his looks altered to avoid arrest.

In February and May last year, Borrets handed down various prison terms to 82 persons arrested during the raid, including three operatives of the drug dens who were given life terms. Borotong and his wife, however, almost got away scot-free, courtesy of then Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

In one of his most bizarre issuances, Gonzalez ordered government prosecutors to "move for the suspension of proceedings" against the Borotongs in the Pasig Regional Trial Court. The order was issued on Nov. 30, 2006, the same day Borotong's other wife Minnie submitted a petition for review of the case. One month later, Gonzalez reformed the government's key witness, Sanner Palao, that he had been removed from the Witness Protection Program. Palao, Borotong's brother-in-law, claimed he was a trusted aide of the drug lord and provided details about the drug syndicate's operations, including the places where they were selling drugs and where the money was deposited. But Gonzalez said that Palao appeared to be "more guilty" than Borotong and accused the police of coddling him. He dismissed Palao as a "convicted criminal" and "not a credible witness."

The police appealed Gonzalez's moves, but limited their protest to issuing statements that were not for arrest. It was the prosecutors—five senior Assistants Cecilia, Annie Fidales, Elizabeth Bevilat, Edna Makay-Valdez and Maribel Balagtas—who responded by doing the heroic thing: they simply ignored their boss and defied his order and were on with the job of prosecuting Borotong. And Borrets completed the shaming of Gonzalez by anchoring his verdict on Palao's testimony, which he described as "straightforward, clear, convincing and credible."

All of them—the police, the prosecutors and the judge—should take a bow. The entire, which has long suffered the scourge of drugs and the ignominy of being identified by the United Nations as the third largest source of shabu, owes them a special gift of gratitude.

But even as justice has won a great victory, it seems to be incomplete. Where are the prosecutors who made it possible for the syndicate to operate within a zone's throw from the headquarters of the PNP Eastern Police District? Where are the local officials who conveniently looked the other way as the shabu flow market flourished within sniffing distance of city hall?

Palao mentioned some names in the PNP he talked of payoffs to NBI agents. If he can be persuaded to talk, Borotong should be able to name more names. And the authorities apparently know this, or else why would they ensure such tight security arrangements at the promulgations of his sentence—a 24-vehicle convoy, a 200-member security detail and even snipers around the court premises?

Despite the conviction of Borotong, the case should not be closed. There are others who have to be haled to court, preferably the heavens Borotong's.

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Truth, power, love and money

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

NOT TOO LONG AGO, A COUPLE OF BISHOPS of the Catholic Church who were attending an important meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) were invited to have a meal with some Malacañang officials. The purpose of the meeting ostensibly was to foist the policies on what the government was doing on its address on some issues over which the Church had expressed some concern.

As they stood up from the table at the end of the meal, the bishops found themselves being given envelopes containing duties. The Palace assistants reminded that the cash was meant to cover "expenses" for the "ati kan," One of the bishops, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, who was the CBCP vice president at the time, politely refused the envelope. The media reported the incident, and Archbishop Ledesma confirmed that indeed it happened. The good bishop, one of the most decent men I have had the honor to know, must have been totally dismayed by this low people and insulting act. He had traveled to Manila from Mindanao, where he is based, to attend the CBCP meeting, and not to confer with representatives of the President. There was an appointed time for us to see the President.

But, presumably, for the men of the Palace, this was standard practice. A year later, it was the turn of legislators and a few chosen local government officials to be treated to the same presidential "generosity" after attending a meeting in Malacañang, in which they were briefed about the Palace position on the looming impeachment case against President Maranguad Arroyo. (In point: were sent home with a small gift bag containing cash. Pampam ga kasi, tulad ko matulis, who was at the meeting, spurned the bag after handing his envelope to hand a half million pesos in cash. He must either made to sign for it, not was he informed what the money was for. Later, he made an effort to return the money, but to one in Malacañang was prepared to receive it.

Apart from the ordinary languages we use in our daily life, there are other means available for communicating meaning to other people. The most significant of these, the sociologist Niklas Luhmann says, are truth, power, love and money. The function of these "symbolic media of communication," as he calls them, is the same as that of language—to ensure a common understanding among participants in an interaction, and to prompt the other into making a desired selection from a set of possible actions.

To know this is to begin to understand how "money talks," why "truth will set us free," how "power corrupts," and why "love is the language of the heart." In modern society these symbolic media are assigned their specific spheres, where they facilitate the transmission and processing of information very complex messages. Truth becomes the language of science (or of religion in early societies), power becomes the medium of politics, love (or friendship) that of the family, and money the principal medium of economic exchange.

In modern society, where social relations align are highly differentiated, people take care not to switch from one medium to another with in the same relationship. To do so would be to sow confusion. Thus, you do not give a prime some money in the confessional box to pay for your sins. You are not allowed to buy votes. Likewise, it is not regarded as good form to invoke love or friendship to gain acceptance for a political program. You cannot use love as payment for a house or a car without putting your identity and self-respect in doubt. And you can-

not use power to define the truth, or to secure love, just as you cannot buy truth and love.

The easier sign of dysfunction in any relationship or institutional system is the employment of an extraneous medium for communicating and directing meanings. A parent tries to substitute the love of his children by lavishing them with money and material things. A scientist shapes his truths according to the requirements of the powerful so in response to market demands. A politician who public office by using wealth rather than the power of persuasion. A judge offers his decisions to the highest bidder, or bends the law to accommodate political power. And a businessman enlists the help of a politician to ensure the success of his enterprise, or to prevent it from being taken away from him.

It is the misfortune of our society that our leaders have come to grasp the epistemic nature of our recurrent crises. Our political system has been hobbled by our inability to elect leaders with unquestioned legitimacy who can inspire the nation with their vision. Our economic system is heavily politicized and dominated by patron-client networks. Our judicial system is seriously compromised it cannot muster enough authority and credibility to settle disputes and prominent conflicts. Our families and our communities have quietly borne the brunt of these crises and, unless we are soon we may find our whole social world no longer a matter.

Our problem, then, is not unique to us. They are an integral part of the troubled transition to modernity. Yet, the conditions that would hasten this passage are already upon us. We only need to focus our collective will on the continuous tasks that lie ahead. We can begin by telling ourselves that we have credible and orderly elections in 2010. Yet, dearly we cannot do that until the Arroyo regime finally accepts that its time is over.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Weighing GMA and her administration

(Part of a series)

GET REAL

SolVin CoSiw-Monsod

IT WILL BE PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S ninth and last State of the Nation Address (Sona), notwithstanding the opposition's preference to the contrary (except by President Ramos, who was at the helm of the government when the Supreme Court ruled that the law has served longer than any other Philippine president, and she therefore will have more to either answer for or to take credit for in what will be her valedictory (whether some doubt her departure or not).

Because this is so, especially the national elections in 2010, more than the usual effort will be made by the administration to present its performances in the best possible light, while the opposition will be doing the opposite. One can safely predict that the opposition will find abundantly exciting pond to say about the administration's performance, and concentrate on the latter's failures.

From a non-partisan viewpoint, what can be said about the performance of the Arroyo administration? Let's start with broad strokes. If we are to use economic growth and its twin, income growth and poverty reduction, and use as a basis of comparison the performance of her predecessors, here is what we find:

In terms of the country's economic growth, President Arroyo has done better than her predecessors. The average GDP growth rate of the country between 2001 and 2008 was 4.8 per cent, higher than that achieved by the others—Aquino 1986-1992, 4.1 percent; Ramos, 1992-1998, 4.2 percent; Estrada, 1998-2000, 3.3 percent).

But if she did better than her predecessors as far as economic growth is concerned, the performance worse than they account for Mr. Ichiro) in making sure that the fruits of that growth were equitably shared, i.e., in reducing income poverty. On a fixed level of living as measured by the poverty threshold (known as the Subsistence Basic), poverty incidence went down by 6.3 percentage points during Mrs. Aquino's watch; it went further down by another 5.5 percentage points during Mr. Ramos' watch. In stark contrast, by the end of 2008, poverty incidence was only 2.8 percentage points lower than it was in 2000. Worse, the number of poor families increased by 900,000 families or 3.3 million people between 1997 and 2006—not only erasing all the gains made by the Aquino and Ramos administrations between 1985 and 2000, but actually surpassing the number of poor families from that 1985 level by 200,000.

In short, economic growth under the Arroyo administration has not been pro-poor.

How let's get into a little more detail, and this time, we will compare her performance not against the performance of her predecessors, but against what she herself set out to accomplish, as stated in her administration's Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for (2004-2010).

Let's start with the 2004-2010 MTPDP says:

"By 2010, this will be the 10 point legacy of the Arroyo administration:

"1. Ten million jobs shall have been created.

"2. Everyone of school age will be in school, in air-conditioned classrooms, in cost-enabling conducive to learning. Three thousand school buildings a year shall have been built and a computer put in every high school.

"3. The budget shall have been balanced with the right resources collected and spending on the right things programs.

"4. The network of transport and digital infrastructure on which the Arroyo government embarked in 2001 shall have linked the entire country.

"5. Water and water shall have been regularly provided to the entire country.

"6. Metro Manila will have been decongested with economic activity growing and spreading to new centers of government, business and community in Luzon, in the Visayas, and in Mindanao.

"7. The Subic-Clark corridor will have become the most competitive international service and logistics center in the Southeast Asian region.

"8. Elections will no longer raise a doubt about their integrity. The electoral process will have been completely computerized.

"9. Peace will have come to Mindanao and all insurgency areas.

"10. The drinking issues generated by Edsa 1, Edsa 2 will have had a just closure."

Bear in mind these 10 targets, by the way, are similar to the acronym "REAP THE CROP" that stood budget, infrastructure for all, Automated elections, Transport and digital infrastructure, Terminating NPA/MILF hostilities, Healing the wounds of Edsa, Electricity and water for all, Opportunity to create 10 million jobs, Development Mindanao, and Partnership (with Client State), which the Arroyo administration has used as its mantra.

There are other targets in the MTPDP such as those regarding the rule of law, corruption, constitutional reform, and bureaucratic reforms, but we limit ourselves to what is contained in the slogan.

Did she indeed REAP THE CROP?

(To be continued)

The popularity of Cory Aquino

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

AT THE OUTSET, LET ME SAY THAT I REGARD Corazon Aquino as the Philippines' most important president of the postmartial period, since it was through her leadership that the country got out from under the authoritarian rule of Ferdinand Marcos, and democracy was restored.

In addition, I would say that she is also our most popular president, in the sense that she enjoyed public satisfaction with her performance when in office, and almost public trust in her afterwards, up to the present.

Surveys done on Cory Aquino go back to the July 1983 survey political opinion poll by the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, which looked into the popularity of personal opposition to Marcos in the next presidential election, then scheduled for 1987. Cory was not at the top of the list at that time, but somewhere in the middle. I recall that Salvador "Doy" Laurel, Jovito Salonga and Sgapt. to "Butz" Aquino were more popular. But she was "Those may have been others too; I do not have the BBC reference with me as I write this.)

When Marcos called for a "snap election" to be held in February 1986, and the opposition agreed to unite under Cory as their common candidate, the entire campaign shifted to her. The first real survey that I myself did, on the election was her victory in the Manila count, which gave her a commanding 68 percent of the vote.

(The official count, by the Batasang Pambansa, had it the other way around, with 68 percent for Marcos. The mono-lookd Weather Station survey of May 1986 asked respondents for whom they had voted, and found 68 percent saying it was Cory—a bit of overestimation, relative to the Namfrel outcome, that is normal whenever a poll asks people about their vote after an election has already been settled. Incidentally, the May 1986 survey also found that the people's top basis for considering Cory a legitimate president was "people power," rather than a finding of certainty that she won the election.)

In May 1986, when Cory got her first net satisfaction rating of +33, her honeymoon was just beginning. The second round, in October 1986, obtained her peak rating of +72, which is the second high for all presidents to this day. The third-round, in March 1987, or just after the ratification of the new Constitution in February, got her a +69, times more euphoric.

Up to April 1992, in the 19 1991 national surveys leaders then, due to lack of sponsors fund of the Aquino period, Cory's net satisfaction rating was "very Good (+50 or more) six times, Good (+20 to +49) four times, Moderate (+10 to +20) six times, and Mediocre (-9 to +9), twice (+7 both times). Thus the range of net satisfaction ratings of Cory's performance as president was from a low of +7 to a high of +72.

For comparison, the ranges of net satisfaction with other presidents have been: Fidel Ramos, from +15 to +69 in 27 national surveys (18 Very Goods, 5 Goods, 16 Moderates, and 3 Mediocres); Joseph Estrada, from +5 to +66 in 18 national surveys (3 Very Goods, 5 Moderates, and 3 Mediocres); and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, from -38 to +20 in 40 national surveys as of February 2009. (SWS uses the terms Poor for -10 to -39, Bad for -40 to -69, and Very Bad for -70 or worse.)

For all presidents, popularity tends to be relatively high at the beginning, or honeymoon part of, and then tends to decline later on. The decline is not smooth, but ragged, depending on events. The short list of presidents together is even more ragged, on account of episodic new honeymoons. This new tenth pattern, long evident from polling on the United States, therefore applies to the Philippines also. Its note, based on experience with a great variety of topics, not solely in politics and governance, I always accompanied an initial hypothesis that the patterns of Filipino opinions and attitudes are similar to global patterns, unless proven otherwise by survey research.

Right after the two serious military coup attempts of August 1987 and December 1989 attack, SWS did rapid polls in Metro Manila to look into popular attitudes towards the government and the rebel military groups. In both surveys, the results showed that people wanted to support President Aquino and to oppose the coup plotters. While accepting the validity of the complaints of the rebel military, most people felt that those complaints did not justify attempts to topple her by means of a coup. Aside from publishing these findings, I also protested them privately to the president and to groups of high military officers.

After president-leave office, from time to time SWS keeps track of their popularity by means of near ratings. "Net trust" is the percentage with trust in it net minus the percentage with little trust or no confidence. As of the February 2009 SWS national survey, there were 60 percent with much trust in Cory Aquino, and 23 percent with little trust in her, for a "Good" net trust rating of +38 (rounded).

As of late February, public trust in Cory Aquino was higher than trust in former presidents Estrada and Ramos. Cory recovered strongly from a low point in late 2000 (during "jueteguepeti"), when people were probably wondering why she joined those trying to oust Erap. Erap made a comeback from poor ratings in 2001. I think because his constituentsal he met-real years amounted to some statements. PMN's recent ratings are, to my view, being held down by his efforts to support the very unpopular current president.

The restoration of democracy made it possible for open opinion polling to grow and mature. One of Cory Aquino's great legacies to the Filipino people is that she provided the political environment needed to restore mechanisms for the scientific articulation of their collective will.

+ + +

Contact SWS: www.sws.org.ph or mahar@sws.pulse@sws.org.ph.

'Think, validate, question and cross-reference'

COMMENTARY

Nerie Yap, Rowanne Cruz

JUST AS I PRAY AGAIN LAMENTING THE LACK of media support for books and authors and striking literary figures were hosted a celebration of the 10th year of Blue Readers, the quarterly glossy of Summit Media and Ya Bilar Fashion Foundation for teachers was off the press—with writer and literature Isabelle Ocampo on the cover. Yes, recalling the confidence of a superstar that an intellectual might be—Ocampo, the charismatic 17-year-old high school student, is one of the few youth would bother to aspire for such heights?

A popular teacher and lecturer because he presents history as engaging conversation or even gossip, he takes pride in being known as the poster boy of Philippine history; however, it is Ocampo's tips on teaching that have made her an icon among us. Textbooks, he points out, are not to be considered the "last word" on any subject. A teacher needs to supplement and broaden what textbooks offer by reading what is current, surfing the Net, and discussing with others.

He also reminds many teachers is to encourage their students to read. To Ocampo, this dilemma need to experience handling a physical book. He whenever they read in whatever platform, students must learn to "think, validate, question, and cross-reference..." Learn to be a critical reader. Teachers have to lead their students to the right path to read books.

And if not books (and enough), one will see that offer sources of printed information can be found. There exist many examples of what local publishing can do. Quality does not need to be sacrificed with low-cost publishing. There is also an interesting by the reasons they can get to the first place. With the costs of desktop publishing and print-on-demand today, these examples should trigger off other book ideas from those resolutely inspired, similarly impassioned and in effect.

Now comes a book to finish a close milestone. It was the project of the Tarem High School class of 1987 that led to the publication of "10 Moments in Batya Buti" (2009) by Bernie C. Villoria, with full color illustrations by Sandro P. Siena and Joseph E. Dayao. Of course, it helped that the author is himself a member of the class and has written stories which have won recognition from the Palanca and the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards, namely "Inhuwayan" and "Ang Kamot ni Juan," by the introduction, Villoria addresses parents, teachers, and all who work with the youth, encouraging them to use the stories not only for assignments in Filipino and Makabayan but also as springboards for discussions, reasoning, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking.

Consider this another resource for older students. A 2008 publication of Hands On Manila Foundation Inc. is "St. Hands On! Inspiring Volunteer Stories." It can never as a wonderful introduction to social outreach involvement and to reading and writing models of first-person accounts. Even the most reluctant of students will, at the very least, be drawn to the experiences on pages of familiar names (and their lives for some regulations in Filipino and Makabayan but also as springboards for discussions, reasoning, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking.

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Some some another book's duties: that books and library can be become material for primitive education options. A system of outsourced support for libraries is still wanting.

Nerie Yap, Rowanne Cruz
Nerie Yap is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People. Da Pamalas-tan for Manilenos People Power, and a trustee of the Sa Aklat Anihat Foundation. Email comments to nerieyap@gmail.com.

Of chocolates and cheese

BUSINESS MATTERS

Roberto F. de Ocampo

IN MY APRIL 5 COLUMN TITLED "PESIMIS, bonbon kayo ano," I stated that:

First, the personal financial situation will last longer than some anticipate, and even if a recovery will be inevitable, it will not be back to business as usual;

Second, that it will result in a restructuring of the financial sector; and

Third, most likely, Asia will lead the recovery.

Since then, I'm glad to see that a number of developments have taken place supporting these forecasts.

First of all, economists, while arguing in their ivory towers about whether the recovery would appear like a "V," "U," "L" or "W," all agree that a recovery seems to have arrived at the consensus that it is more likely to be an extended U-shaped one. Meaning to say, the crisis will last a bit longer before recovery takes place. This, in spite of the actual "green shoots" or occasional signs of recovery that have surfaced from time to time in recent months.

This is most likely because the green shoots tend to reflect mainly movements in the financial sector, upon which the initial thrust of stimulus packages were focused, while the real sector continued towards further weakness, particularly in the West, with the near collapse of the car industry, the continued slump in the housing sector, and rising unemployment.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama submitted a sweeping, regulatory reform package addressing the US financial system, that could stem, among others, the recurrence of the outright run of the freewheeling use of fancy financial instruments such as obscure derivatives that many blamed for the crisis.

As for the notion that Asia will lead the charge in recovery, this was reinforced by the recent high-level international economic conferences, namely the Trilateral Commission and the Emerging Markets Forum annual meetings, where the consensus seemed to be that China would likely lead the recovery, with India not too far behind.

The rationale usually advanced for why India may grow slower than China is the former's current of government that has less centralized decision-making than China.

Something that this will indeed lead the recovery efforts should the Philippines position itself?

Over the years, we have speculated ever trying to emulate the Japan or Singapore models—but, sadly the models of the so-called "Asian miracle economies" that are export-driven, with a consistent high savings rate of 30 percent.

It may be time for us to invest this strategy since, among other things, it is precisely the export-dominated economies that appear most hurt by the financial crisis.

Of course, this does not mean that we are not hurting. The fact is that we are quite badly affected, since our so-called "advantages" is normally rooted in some source, in the weakness of an economy whose exports actually plunged and ultimately dependent on remittances from OFWs.

There is really no compelling reason to insist on using a new growth strategy for the medium term for one, it is instructive to realize that not every country in Europe is trying to be exactly like Germany—thus, there is no point in our trying to be exactly like Japan.

In Europe, if your economy is good at cheese (Switzerland), then be it. Do your best. The question to is would be: What would be our chocolates and cheese, if we're not striving to be a Japan, while nevertheless maintaining a reasonably healthy economy for ourselves within our regions?

I think our chocolates and cheese could mainly be in three areas: services sector, tourism and agro-industry.

It is clear that with the rise of our call center/business process outsourcing industry, we do have the beginnings of a positioning of points in the services sector, leveraging within the region. The main ingredient for us to succeed would be our English-speaking advantage and are should place more emphasis in science and technology in our educational system.

For tourism, my national has outstanding. I have gone to just about every island tourist spot of the Philippines, from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi, and some of them are much fabulous as Bohol, just to name a few of our attractions. I gauge our current approach to tourism that Secretary Ace Durano has undertaken to be the most realistic and focused one that I have observed through various administrations, and I hope this overall momentum is maintained of increasing success over time.

Finally, we cannot keep on shooting the messes that we are primarily an agricultural country and not take advantage of the full potential of our agricultural base. It requires moving away from subsistence farming to agro-industrial production methods, and subsequently towards a service based processing industry. This demands serious review of our land reform strategy towards an emphasis on productivity rather than just land ownership—a subject matter I hope to return to in a subsequent column.

It goes without saying that all these could have a better chance of being achieved with a national leadership that focuses on the nation and its future, rather than on self-serving thoughts of "myself and my political future." We would hope for such an outlook emanating after next year's election.

Roberto F. de Ocampo, former finance secretary, is now chairman of the bank (1903, 1906 and 1907

Job offer

THE JOB OFFER CAME IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED PLACE: a supermarket line.

It was a typical Sunday morning scene of middle-aged moms patiently endoming per bunch more long lines, when everybody else is racing to get home to cook their food per citizens. I was probably the only yuppie-looking girl there, holding a little red shopping basket half-filled with shampoo

YOUNG BLOOD

Michelle Camille Correa

and other beauty products, plus a pack of multigrain crackers. The long line didn't seem to be getting shorter. I was getting impatient so I decided to people watch and to eavesdrop on other people's purchases. Cute twinned with the usual canned goods, instant noodles, bottled eggs, cookies and chips for the kids.

This time I was particularly drawn to the middle-aged woman in front of me. She was carrying a clear plastic purse, the contents of which I could see clearly. Big wad of cash and a bunch of papers. I remember thinking what a tacky purse it was. It was a clear plastic purse, and seeing it around is like lounging at the beach, wearing a small and flimsy cover-up over your bikini, which really doesn't cover anything. It simply made no sense.

My window shopping was suddenly interrupted when the woman turned to me. She took mind talk. Only.

At first, she asked a harmless question: "What time does this store open on Sundays?" Which evolved into a same remark: "Sayang pala nagising 9:30 pa ako pumunta. I should have come at 9:00." And developed into an unknowingly great flattery: "Are you still in college?" (Uh, me? I've been part of the work force for about six years already.) "What do you do?" (Nothing funny, just a writer for a magazine.) And culminated with a million offer: "I work for (insert name of insurance company here). You could make good money as an agent."

The automatic reply in my head was, "No, thanks." But because I feared I might miss an opportunity I politely listened.

The woman was a retiree who used to work in a big insurance company. Like most sales persons I know, the conversation was her business. She said her job enabled her to pay for her house in an exclusive village. It also allowed her to travel to places like the United States and Europe.

Of course, my eyes widened at the sound of Europe. It's a place I can only dream of going to. Working the world per by in cafés in Paris, sipping cafe and chips in London, lying on the grassy fields of Scotland—these delicious images flashed through my mind, and I asked to say: "Yes, yes, I will absolutely my writing job to be a job selling insurance again!" Except for one important thing. An agent can only go to Europe if—and I mean IF—he or she reaches or (gasp!) surpasses her quota, right? And besides, how can a shy person like me ever meet quota?

The woman seemed to read my mind. She knew when I reached because I already told her. And she noticed that I was thinking some before giving my answers.

"You are a writer," she reasoned out, as she began her sales pitch. "You understand things easily and you are able to explain things well. We need people like you. But you have to be willing to work hard. Be ready to work and call your own. You're from (name) name of one of the top universities). You shouldn't be wasting your time there. You should be earning more."

She mentioned how sales agents help people plan their financial... an appeal to my "man be others" training.

There was an uncomfortable silence from my end. I kept looking for an escape.

"You're a lot shy, no? You will lose your chance when you wait with me," she said with a smile.

I smiled back politely. What else could I say?

Then she was rummaging through her bag for her calling card.

I said I didn't have mine with me. It was a lie since I had many calling cards.

She handed me a notepad and a pen for me to write my contact numbers down. Nothing. Thinking I would come up with a good excuse to decline her offer later.

When I handed back her pad, she smiled at me and said, "You're a bit pretty, too."

Great. Flattery gets you to places. For a while there, I began to imagine myself as a sales agent, rolling in piles of money, commuting my hefty sales commission in Fathers else? Dead!

But no. Something shook some sense into me. Perhaps it was the big pair of shades she wore. I only realized there when I began searching for the shape of things to some should I, as the saying goes, "jump ship." I tried looking into her eyes as she smiled, and I couldn't see right through her shades, unlike the way I am right through the contents of her purse. I decided that she couldn't possibly know what's best for me.

The truth is that at 27, I too am still not sure where I should be heading. But I know what I love: food and eat, the internet and games, languages and travelling, basketball, and food.

I don't really know where these passions and interests will take me. All I know is that I enjoy doing them so much that I feel so alive, so purposeful, and so hopeful about what destiny will bring me. A great, big world is out there. And I want to be part of it. But I want to be a part of it only if it feels right.

So I smiled back at her and told her I would think about it. Even if I knew I wouldn't too.

Later that afternoon, I received a text message about getting into investing as an investment agent. But there was nothing to think about. It had been decided.

Michelle Camille Correa, 27, works as a writer at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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philweb

Jackson's finest hour

THIS IS A MEMORIES TO HAUNT DIE-hard's article, "I am no Michael Jackson fan." (Inquirer, 7/4/09) I wasn't a huge fan of Jackson's either, despite having grown to a dark MTV age when his videos reigned supreme. I simply found his music sizeable, creatively good for a chorus and a chaser to a beer or two. I cannot recall the number of times I've heard "You Are Not Alone" or "Rock With You" or "Black or White" during my childhood. "We Are The World" was something we'd sing as a class during a United Nations themed school program. "Beat It" was the perennial ditty the teachers would demonstrate to teacher's Day. The video for "Thriller" until now can still make the hair on the back of my neck stand.

Back was the scope of his influence on me, heightened much more when my neighbor and friend Mona (no pun intended) would "The Ultimate MJ fan" to my shutterbok, signed alongthe line he solved here for the ninth 1987 "Ellicary" runners. It sadly was one of his final glimpses of the iconic before his previous misfortune, spiraling him down to a dark abyss he never was able to recover from.

I heard the news as the seasons I woke up on a day morning. There were no tears, just shock. How someone who still held so much promise could fade away. Is the stalker of incriminations Jackson's demise alludes to the myth of an embodied life, joining the ranks of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Princess Diana and Heath Ledger. I held some reservations for the media circuses that made his life called Jackson and the butt of jokes. I even felt angry at him for giving in—but then, we will never know what went on in his mind that compelled him to become a man truly larger than life.

Save as his death sparked controversies, Michael Jackson's music phenomenally remembered. He never have to everywhere. The songs I once was irritated with but took for granted as normal a new life. I listened to them and found them to be perfect—the masterpieces of a prodigy. He manipulated the essence of what he aspired to say in several choice words, punctuated by apt melodies. "Earth Song" was written long before all the buzz about climate change. My mother, who was indifferent upon his death, now weeps every time she hears "Heal the World." The poignancy of "Childhood" struck a deep chord, helping me understand what he really felt. And I cried.

From the many memories we have of Jackson, I choose to remember him most as an extraordinary songwriter. I'm glad that his words, along with his music, serve as a catalyst to inspire billions.

—HERSCHEL DIE,
herschel.die@gmail.com

Heir cries, 'All quiet on the SSS front'

MY MOTHER, JOSEFA ASILADO, with SSS No. 03-0750826-1, died on Dec. 3, 2008 after enjoying her lifetime pension despite her 144 monthly contributions. That was because the contributions were not posted.

Fellow the client, I, as a secondary beneficiary, applied for the benefits to pay for the funeral while the bequeathed is led with sickness. We were granted ₱43,000 because at the time, 2005, the monthly contributions posted were for 30 months only.

I sent letters requesting the posting of more monthly contributions. Then on Feb. 11, 2009, I was told by the head of the SS/SS (Self-Employed/Voluntary Member) section that my mother's contributions (120) were already posted.

The number of contributions did not include the monthly contributions remitted by her employer Ma. San Agustin despite the fact that a manual verification had confirmed the contributions from Jan. 14, 2009 I was even informed these were ready for encoding.

Finally, on March 5, 2009 we received two checks: one for the said sickness benefits (₱43,000) and the amount of ₱5,400—for a total of ₱48,400 only. I was appalled because:

- For the 30 month contributions, we were given ₱43,000; whereas for the 75-month contributions, we received ₱10,800 only;
- As for the 19 month reimbursements made by employer Ma. San Agustin, we got less.

On March 12, 2009 I wrote SSS Baguio requesting a clarification of the payments.

No answer.

On May 26, 2009, 75 days after the first letter, I wrote again. And again, no answer, no anything. All quiet on the SSS front.

What are we paying SSS officials and employees for?

—DIANA B. ASILADO,
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LETTERS

Independent probe into Mindanao bombings urged

WE CONDEMN IN THE STRONGEST possible terms the series of bombings in Mindanao that killed and injured innocent civilians, including women and children. We believe that the bombings are well-planned and are meant to create a wedge of fear among the populace.

We also condemn the bombings near places of worship as these could ignite hatred between Muslims and Christians. At this time when religious bigotry would be used to justify violence, there is a reason to believe that the bombings are meant to thwart public attention from the real issue in Mindanao and to flame a Christian-Muslim conflict.

We call on the authorities to undertake a speedy, principled and justifiable investigation of the bombings and make the perpetrators accountable for their dastardly deeds. Likewise, we caution the authorities not to arrest anyone or attain and subject the suspects to torture just to make these people admit their participation in the bombings. We believe that the suspects must be arrested in a humane and lawful manner, not in the way we saw on national television, where a military officer punched an alleged bombing suspect in the face in the presence of media propagandists just to earn brownie points from the public.

We believe that the series of bombings is not a reason for the government to declare a state of emergency that may now more than ever, abuse and disappoint among civilians.

The claim of Sgt. Nidal Ibrahim that the military has something to do with the bombings as in the past cannot be disregarded. Thus, even the military must also be investigated for its possible participation in the bombings.

We therefore join the different groups in calling for an independent body that will investigate the series of bombings. The group must be composed of multisectoral known for their objectivity and impartiality and who are respected highly by the international human rights community.

The Filipino people, Muslim and Christians alike, are longing for a just and lasting peace. We challenge every stakeholder to show their sincerity to achieving peace based on justice and people's participation.

—ALBERT MARAS,
secretary general,
Promotion of Church
People's Response,
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pcpcnet@gmail.com

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REGISTRATION IS ALREADY CLOSED

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Cotabato City closes shop for a day

By Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS and medical clinics shut down operations yesterday and turned this city of 270,000 people into a virtual ghost town, in observance of outrage at last week's bombing near Cotabato's Roman Catholic cathedral.

Organizers said their joint action was not an act of defiance nor intended to embarrass the city government but merely their way of condemning the bomb attack that killed eight people and wounded more than 50.

Even roadside eatery owners joined in the protest.

The decision to close shop for a day was a consensus among businessmen, said Oscar Tan Ahing, president of the Cotabato Grocers Association.

Dr. Johnny Balogo, adviser for Mindanao of the Philippine Medical Association, said private clinics and hospitals were also closed. But emergency cases will still be entered, he said.

"The emergency room will remain open 24/7," Balogo added for laymen.

"To send an expression of condemnation and warn our enemies to ridicule the local government. Please, don't take this as an affront," said Vic Bong Chua, president of the Cotabato Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mayor Muslimin Sema remarked piqued when he told Radio dxMS he did not care if the businessmen shut down their establishments.

"They want to close shop, go ahead," he said.

The protest was sparked by last Sunday's bomb blast near the Immaculate Conception Cathedral and similar attacks in Iligan City and Jolo some two days.

Fr. Eduardo Bendijo, president of the Notre Dame University, said the daylong action was "not an economic sabotage, but a sacrifice to show solidarity with the victims."

He said this was the people's way of showing their desire "to end hostilities, where most of the victims were the young. I including] moderate and the innocents."

Probe hits wall

The investigation of the July 5 explosion that left Jolo in a mild. Two suspects questioned earlier were found innocent and have been released, police said.

Senior Supt. Alvin Gamayon, city police director, said the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) was preparing the sketch of a possible suspect based on an image captured by a closed-circuit TV camera mounted near the blast scene.

Once the sketch was made public, "it would be easy to uncover his identity," Gamayon said.

The city government has set up a P5-million reward for the bomber's arrest.

Quezado appeal

In a pastoral statement read by a priest during the "Mass of Thanksgiving and for Peace" at the Cotabato Cathedral, Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo urged authorities to speed up their investigations.

"I urgently appeal to all our authorities, local, regional and national, to expedite the identification, arrest and detention of the perpetrators. I ask for the full force of the law to be applied," said Quevedo, former president of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

Quevedo, who was attending the annual CBCP conference in Tagaytay City, appealed to the public to refrain from making "unfounded speculation to gain political and ideological leverage."

"Exploiting the tragedy and the grief of families ... is certainly insensitive and irresponsible," he said of reports that the bombings could be an off-shoot of Muslim-Christian conflict.

In mosques, Muslim religious preachers (ulamas) denounced the bombing and terrorism, according to Datuk Mike Ibrahim, president of the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines.

The condemnation from Christian and Muslim sectors was expected, Ibrahim said, adding: "We have to jointly act because bombs do not choose their targets."

In Jolo, Sulu, families of the victims of Tuesday's explosion, which killed two people and wounded 27, asked the authorities to immediately arrest those responsible.

Sulu Representatives Yusop Jikiri and Munir Arbison along with several mayors denounced an independent probe.

Vendor at NBI

In Iligan, where a separate blast on Tuesday wounded nine people, a man seen on a CCTV camera carrying a box deadly before the explosion went to the NBI to clear his name.

Samad Abad A. said he was an accidental vendor and the box contained his wares, NBI Digos office chief Ben Dozon said.

"My neighbors told me I was the man on TV," Dozon quoted the man as saying.

Cherilyn Salinas, Edwin Arrocoseo, Ed Sitoy and Jaclee Dane Inquirer Mindanao

HEADAY OF A BLAST Police check out only passenger boom and dropper's key: the private vehicles in Digos City, Davao del Sur, which is known to be a drop-off point of terrorists from south and central Mindanao. The city will observe the first year anniversary on July 14 of the bombing that killed six and wounded dozens. DENNIS GARCIA

AFP lowers Metro alert to 'blue'

From page A1

outrage threatened the claim as bogus.

Yesterday, opposition Sen. Pia Cayetano scolded her sister in the commentary when she called Mayor Marella military reservists Col. Maj. Gen. Jojo Lee Rojo as "alarmist general" for saying that Islamist bombers may have slipped into Metro Manila.

"The general's alarmist comments achieved nothing except sow confusion and create even more mentality," Cayetano said in a statement.

"Or is it possible that the general also knows something about a scare plot that the [Obsidian] does not know about? Is it possible he [Obsidian] is being kept in the dark by Malacañang?"

The senator said Rojo, chief of the National Capital Region Command (NCRCom), should be supervised for revealing two intelligence information and creating unnecessary panic.

Enough troops

With the lowering of the alert to "blue," NCRCom spokesperson Maj. Carlo Ferrer told reporters only 58 percent of the NCR-Core have been required to stay put inside their camp, while the rest could proceed with their activities as usual.

"We have enough troops to secure Metro Manila," Ferrer said in a text message.

Under a red alert, all leaves are canceled and everybody is confined in the camp. The NCRCom has an estimated 3,000 troops under its wings.

The MMDA declared the red alert on Wednesday temporarily to prevent a spillover into Metro Manila of the bombings that had struck parts of Central Mindanao recently.

Ferrer said the alert went down to blue beginning noon on Thursday. But on Thursday afternoon, the major had said the alert level was still red.

'Threat not imminent'

Ferrer also maintained that when Palace talked to the media on Wednesday about the supposed bomb threats in the capital, the general had not been informed of any elaborating under designating Executive Secretary and AFC head Eduardo Ermita as the sole security spokesperson.

Ermita told the Inquirer yesterday that based on "information gathered through intelligence, the [bombing] threat is not imminent."

"Based on their assessment, the alert can now be lowered," Ermita said on the phone.

"Remember, the threat is not serious."

Military spokespersons were very careful in giving out information yesterday.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr. said Palm and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado saw on Wednesday but he would not say what directives might have been issued.

"I am not at liberty to say anything, we were told to shut up," Brawner said.

Amid the welter of seemingly conflicting information, a veteran senator-day called the main office of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in Quezon City and said in Filipino: "Sir direk, there's a bomb on the fourth floor."

The call turned out to be hoax. A search yielded no bomb.

Late yesterday, operations at the Office of the Ombudsman were suspended for a day following a bomb threat. Three days earlier, a homemade bomb exploded in the compound but hurt no one.

Net gagged

On June 29, two unexploded C-4 bombs were found at the Department of Agriculture compound on Elliptical Road and outside a high-end condominium unit along Kamputsan Avenue.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said yesterday it would limit to basic information on public statements on incidents involving national security.

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina said reporters police may only touch on basic details of incidents, adding that the PNP had been designated to discuss critical security matters with the media.

He denied that police spokespersons had been gagged.

"On the 'five Ws' [who, what, when, where, why], we can still give information, but on the implications, who are guilty of destabilization, analysis, it will be the AFP," Espina said.

GMA trips

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde denied an Inquirer report that Ms Arroyo had canceled a trip to Cotabato scheduled for yesterday in view of the bombings in the area. Remonde said Ms Arroyo's visit to Cotabato was rescheduled for July 17.

The Inquirer report was based on information from an official of the same area Philippine Information Agency and from Malacañang's photographers who were on standby for Ms Arroyo's trip.

Remonde said Inquirer said they were checking another report that Ms Arroyo's scheduled trip to Leyte on July 14 had been canceled. With reports from Tarra Quismundo and Nancy Carvajal

Where were they when Michael faced sex raps?

MIAMI—THE OUTPOURING of love for Michael Jackson's legacy has been epic. But others say the support shows he faced child molestation allegations.

Death, it seems, has been the ultimate absolution for Jackson.

"There is a tradition that people are sentimental to speak as ill of the dead," said Michael Schwartz, associate professor of psychiatry at Stony Brook University in New York. "This has really brought people together. They feel good about being able to share their grief."

Some fans have been unwavering in their support of Jackson through the years, claiming they never believed allegations that he sexually molested two boys on two separate occasions.

"I never crossed my mind that something like that would be true," said Georgia Purnell, 26, who lives in Athens, Greece, and is studying to be a film director.

But many others didn't watch by Jackson, particularly the filing of May after his behavior—and his apparent—seemed increasingly bizarre.

In 2003, he dangled his infant son over a hotel balcony in Berlin while a throng of fans watched from below. During his 2005 molestation trial, he appeared gaunt and had excoriating back problems that he attributed to stress. The trial was interrupted several times by hospital visits. Jackson once appeared late to court dressed in his pajamas after an emergency room visit.

But all the weirdness seems mostly forgotten now.

Great equalizer

For some who were turned off by Jackson a few years ago, it's like the charges he was accused of never happened, said Paul Levinson, professor of communications and media studies at Fordham University in New York.

"It's become death is the great equalizer," he said, thereby wiping away Jackson from people regarded as so terrible—like Adolf Hitler—that their legacy never ever changes.

Instead, fans all over the world are choosing to focus on his music, with songs played endlessly on the radio and millions more downloaded, meaning them of their love for such hits as "Thriller" and "Beat It."

Five of Jackson's songs are currently top chartbusters in iTunes.

"Michael is going to be remembered as a great entertainer and performer just as much as he will be remembered for his strange life," said Tim Sewerene, 33, of Oklahoma, a fan since "Thriller" came out in 1982.

Taker for granted

Rav Rabbi Shmuley Boteach—who claims he was Jackson's friend and cable Fox's 1999 to 2003—said the display of grief has little to do with Jackson's life-changes.

"We are fast focused on the death of a man. This is the death of a cartoon character, a caricature," Boteach said by telephone from Ireland.

What Black, spokesperson for the fan club Michael Jackson World Network based in Britain, said the public may have taken Jackson for granted.

"I think it's the age-old tale of you don't know what you've got until it's gone. I think it's easier to remember the career of Michael Jackson than the personal life," he said. "People realize the astounding talent that he had." AFP

THE FOCUS has been on MJ's music since his death on June 25. AFP/FILE

Homicide not ruled out in Jackson's death

From page A1

tell you, I don't have that information," he told CNN.

Investigators have apparently narrowed in on a powerful sedative—Diprivan—Demerol or lidocaine a mixed mixture after his death.

The drug is commonly used to induce unconsciousness in hospital patients prior to major surgery and experts say it should only be administered by a trained anesthesiologist.

Sleepless nights

Jackson's longtime dermatologist Arnold Klein told CNN late Wednesday that he had been aware the singer had used the drug in the past.

"I knew at one point he was using Diprivan when he was an inpatient at UCLA," he said. "He was using it with an anesthesiologist to go to sleep at night and I told him he was absolutely insane."

But he denied earlier having the source of the drugs.

Klein, who said he treated Jackson three days before his mysterious death, suggested that any doctor found to have supplied the star with drugs should be prosecuted.

Reports have also emerged of police records that include allegations that Jackson used Demerol as an "anesthetic substitute—and as one time took as many 30 pills each night.

Resting place

Meanwhile, the mystery surrounding Jackson's final resting place deepened on the eve of a memorial service expected to be attended by family members in his hometown of Gary, Indiana.

The city's mayor announced it would hold a memorial service Friday for its most famous son, 50-by-invited by Jackson's father, Joe, feeling speculation above where the "King of Pop" was to be buried, or if he had already been interred after Tuesday's non-scheduled memorial.

The star's gold-plated coffin took center stage at a Staples Center sendoff to his Anthem on Tuesday but there has so far been no confirmation about if and where the star was already buried.

Hebron, a TV ratings group, said 31.1 million Americans tuned in for the event to see Jackson's daughter Paris, 11, publicly remembered emotional emotion with a heartbreaking eulogy to her father.

No final decision

Since the event, money flows switched that the payment was lowered in the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood Hills, with celebrity news website TMZ.com claiming those reports were not true.

The Los Angeles Times said the body was in embalming and no final decision has been made about a burial time or place.

The uncertainty over Jackson's final resting place spurred rumors that his remains may yet end up at his beloved Neverland Ranch northwest of Los Angeles. AFP

Across the NATION

Former cop chief faces 6 sex cases

4 policewomen among alleged victims of abuse in Davao Sur PNP office

DIGOS CITY—SIX women, four of them police officers, filed on Tuesday sexual abuse complaints against former Davao del Sur police director Cesario Durarazzo.

Durarazzo said the charges were trumped up and pushed by some police officers who were dissatisfied with his leadership.

Durarazzo, who was replaced last week, bagged off from further commenting.

He said he had already consulted a lawyer to study the complaints filed by the six women.

Durarazzo, who is now reporting to the Southern Mindanao police office's holding unit in Davao City, said lessons he took a lesser of absence.

Beer drinker

In her complaint, a 30-year-old policewoman said she was molested by Durarazzo in his office on April 26, 2006.

The policewoman said while inside the office, Durarazzo forced her to drink beer even if she was on duty.

"Since he was my superior ... I just went along," she said.

She said while they were eating, Durarazzo made the advances.

"He placed his left hand on my leg and ... slowly and insidiously touched my hand and inserted his fingers in between my fingers, pressing, touching and squeezing it constantly," she said.

The policewoman said she tried to subtly remove her hands.

It was when Durarazzo ordered her to get a glass of water.

When she returned, Durarazzo allegedly made the advances again and asked her to sleep with him.

She dragged his chair near him and embraced me and urged me to sleep with him in his room," she said.

After a few weeks, the policewoman said Durarazzo again summoned her to his quarters.

While there, she said Durarazzo was given his P7,000 supposedly to buy milk for his child.

"I rejected it... I was so upset and so unhappy," she said.

Another complainant, also a 30-year-old policewoman, said in October 2008, Durarazzo asked her to go out with him.

She said she tried to politely decline the offer by saying she would not go because she was to undress.

But Durarazzo, she said, was insistent and offered his wife's clothes.

"With due respect to him as my highest officer, I removed my uniform and retained the other pieces (some items)," the complainant said.

"But he offered me the short pants of his wife and instructed me to change clothes in the comfort room inside his bedroom," she said.

The victim said while changing clothes, Durarazzo came in and suddenly pulled down the short pants she was wearing, revealing her underwear.

"I tried to step him but he hugged me tight, with his face on my neck ... I covered my upper private parts with my hands ... he asked me if I know how to give a massage," she said.

Tearful wife

Another victim, the 33-year-old wife of a policeman, said in June 2008 she went to see Durarazzo to ask him about the possibility of her husband's transfer.

The woman said Durarazzo also molested her inside his office and threatened to have her husband relieved if she refused the advances.

"I went home crying," she said.

Another complainant said she was applying to become a policewoman in October 2008 when Durarazzo also molested her.

Durarazzo said he was panicked by the delay in the filing of the complaints since the cases happened in 2008.

In their affidavits, however, the women said they were afraid to come out in the open because Durarazzo was the most powerful police officer of the province at that time.

They said they only gathered the courage when Durarazzo was finally removed from his post. Orlando Olaya, Inquirer Mindanao

THREE of the four policewomen who filed complaints of sexual harassment and abuse against the former police chief of Davao del Sur attend a press conference called by the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption. The women gathered the courage to come out in the open to reveal sexual advances allegedly committed by Cesario Durarazzo, former police director of the province.

Tesda: Grants put on hold; solon denies role in move

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) said the scholarships of 500 youths were not stopped but put on hold.

Boots Mondejar, Tesda regional director, issued the statement on Friday in response to an Inquirer story.

Mondejar said the 500 scholarships were not stopped but put on hold as Tesda looks for funds.

Presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez on Tuesday said Tesda chief Augusto "Bobsy" Syjuco informed him 500 youths he helped get scholarships were removed from the program because of a request from Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella.

In a press statement, Puentevella denied asking Syjuco to scrap the 500 scholarships.

"It is absolutely false, a blatant lie and a concoction...," said the congressman.

Mondejar said Puentevella did not ask to stop the scholarships of the 500 youths.

But Golez stood by his story that Syjuco told him the scholarships were stopped upon the request of Puentevella.

"I stand by my statement that the only reason Syjuco gave me for stopping the scholarship was that Monico (Puentevella) instructed him to do so," he told the Inquirer on Friday.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ MAGUINDANAO

Student slain

A COLLEGE student was shot and killed by two unidentified men in a market cafe in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, police said Tuesday.

Fredric Bacar, 22, of Market Site, Barangay Poblacion, was attacked around 2:45 a.m. while he and two companions were watching a cockfight, Supt. Leo Ramos, Shariff Aguak police chief, said.

Bacar's companions were not able to flee and hide in an alley as Bacar lay dying with several bullet wounds. Jaikarim Al Bangis, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ LAGUNA

Boulders kill pastor

A PASTOR died and two others were injured when boulders fell on the van they were riding in Lumban, Laguna on Wednesday, police said.

The van was traveling in Barangay Lewin when the boulders fell from a hill, striking the road at around 8:45 a.m., Senior Insp. Marcelito Labador, provincial police director, said.

Arnel Jocallas, 45, pastor of a Christian group and who drove the van, died on the spot. Marlon P. Bernardino, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CAMARINES NORTE

SC urged: Act on Camarines poll row

A 75th Sandiganbayan Young Mine [illegible] resolution has joined the call by the Supreme Court to act on the governorship row in Camarines Norte.

Rep. Benjamin A. Agbayani [illegible] the decision by the anti-graft court to [illegible] Gov. Jesse Robredo [illegible] Vice Gov. Lolit Tobias [illegible] Camarines Norte.

Tobias, as the highest winner in the gubernatorial race in 2007 ...

Tobias filed the protest over what he said were errors in the statement of votes in Labo town. The Comelec's first division declared Tobias the winner by 85 votes in a decision in April last year.

The Comelec en banc upheld the ruling last February but Tobias brought it to the SC.

■ CAMIGUIN

Plastic-free drive

THE LOCAL government of Mambajao in Camiguin, with the Philippine Plant Reconstruction Movement and Hapinata Aftab Exide Inc., launched the Mambajao Plastic-Free Campaign on July 8.

The campaign seeks to inform the people of Mambajao on the negative effects of plastics on the environment. The campaign kicked off after the Mambajao Sanggunian ng Kapitan passed a resolution requesting store owners and vendors at the Mambajao Public Market to limit the use of plastics.

Vice Mayor James A. Edwango, the leading proponent of the resolution, asked people to support the campaign since plastics clog drainage systems and harm marine life.

■ ILOCOS SUR

Ex-governor dies

STA. MARIA, Ilocos Sur—Former Gov. Godofredo Reyes died on July 6. He was 85. Reyes, who served as governor from 1980 to 1986 and at one time as the province's representative to Congress, was a doctor known for his service to poor residents in Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija.

During World War II, Reyes served as battalion surgeon of the 66th Infantry that fought in Northern Luzon. He will be buried at the Catholic cemetery here on July 15. Peter Lu, Julian Inquirer Northern Luzon

Flu suspends classes in 2 Samar schools

By Cynair Cabarrous
Inquirer Visayas

BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR—Classes have been suspended for 10 days in two elementary schools in the province starting Friday after some pupils were found to have influenza A(H1N1) virus.

Fourteen pupils, 11 from the Eugenio Dura Pilot Elementary School in Borongan and 3 from the Central Elementary School in Guiuan town, have tested positive for the influenza A(H1N1) virus.

Nina J. Villalon, Eastern Samar schools division superintendent, issued on Thursday a memorandum to parents about the suspension of classes July 10-21, after the Department of Health (DOH) Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit in Eastern Visayas announced that 14 pupils from the schools were infected with the A(H1N1) virus.

In her memorandum, Villalon also urged parents to bring their children to a clinic or hospital if they show flu symptoms, in such they children the proper way to wash hands and to keep their surroundings clean.

Two weeks ago, the Eastern Samar Provincial Health Office received reports from some parents about their children showing flu-like symptoms.

On July 2, a team of doctors and staff from the regional DOH and the Eastern Samar Provincial Hospital took swab samples from 17 pupils of the Eugenio Dura Elementary School and 19 pupils from the Guiuan Central School, said Cameo Balingan, Eastern Samar provincial health officer.

Another complainant said she was applying to become a policewoman in October 2008 when Durarazzo also molested her.

Durarazzo said he was panicked by the delay in the filing of the complaints since the cases happened in 2008.

In their affidavits, however, the women said they were afraid to come out in the open because Durarazzo was the most powerful police officer of the province at that time.

They said they only gathered the courage when Durarazzo was finally removed from his post. Orlando Olaya, Inquirer Mindanao

SCENE in Hilera, a village in Jane, Marma Erijo that was thought to be the epicenter of A(H1N1) cases in the Philippines. Health officials have set up a command center in the village when the virus struck dozens of people in a village school.

CHURCH goers in Lucena City attend Mass amid a scare over A(H1N1).

INQUIRER Visayas

Raffia feat for Guinness and history books

By Dixie A. Fuentes
Dumaguete, Bohol

WHAT BETTER WAY TO make history than to look back at history?

On June 29, Inabanga bid our 1,813.5 km of continuously woven raffia, which hopefully will underline the Bohol town in the Guinness World Records. What the record books may not reflect is the raffia's interesting metamorphosis in Inabanga, and over the nation's history.

The raffia figured prominently in the Philippines' longest revolt led by Francisco Dagohoy. Shortly around, the Boholanos revolutionaries were by no means poorly clad as native weavers fitted them with raffia uniforms that they wove with pride.

Dagohoy declared his rebellion in Inabanga after the parish priest refused to bury his brother Sagubio. It was the straw that broke the camel's back for Dagohoy, considering that his brother died in the line of duty for Spain.

The native folk here waged what would become the longest revolt against Spain, from 1744 to 1829. At the peak of its power, Spain was described as a kingdom where the sun never set.

Virtual kingdom

Until he died, however, Dagohoy could not be subdued by Spain, ruling a virtual kingdom that repeatedly frustrated Spanish expeditions sent to get him.

"It is also about paying tribute to the rebels for its share in our people's right for self-determination," said Inabanga Mayor Jose Jose Jumamoy.

Jumamoy, 53, said history books did not directly refer to the raffia, but the story of its contribution had been handed down from one generation to another.

"We only CHOOSE the woven fabric we used as dirtying mats and uniforms of the fabulous guerrillas against the Spaniards," he said.

Due to the dearth of fabrics in World War II, the unique said woven raffia was also used as military uniforms by the local resistance movement.

In the 1990s, the importance of the raffia grass as it was used for mats and laid out for drying doe and corn.

Order for 1,808 rolls

Inabanga accepted the challenge to restore an order for 1,008 rolls of the material, as the raffia is locally known, from the old National Marketing Corp. (Dismissed. Then Gov. Rafo Pam issued an order in March 1956 for 1,008 rolls, 36 in by 16 m., to be finished by April or May that year, a quota that the local weavers met.

During the launching of the record line, Gov. Erico Aumentado drew attention to the role that raffia played in the Dagohoy revolt.

"Devoid of supplies and logistics from a centralized organization like the armed forces or any of its branches, Dagohoy and his men used their resolution and similar wise, were improvised uniforms made from the sturdy sagauso as they fought the enemy using guerrilla tactics," Aumentado said.

More to record

If Inabanga makes it to the Guinness book, which should be due when the documentation is validated, the raffia will have given the town another valuable contribution.

Aside from Dagohoy's fear as the one who led the country's longest revolt against Spain, the raffia now stands to export Inabanga to the world.

Jumamoy, however, stressed that there was more to the bid than just landing the town in the Guinness. "This is also about food and employment," he declared during the opening program.

The Department of Trade and Industry figures assumed 1,810 people were engaged in home-based raffia loom weaving in 40 of the town's 50 barangays.

The project's cost was only P500,000, but the money said it was expected to gain more than just the accolades and the dues.

At present, the town with a population of more than 40,000 is primarily agricultural, with its coastal and island villages subsisting on fishing.

Woven raffia are bleached and dyed and the colored fabrics are made into place mats, table runners, pillow cases, decorative rolls, coin-mixed hand bags, fashion accessories and even fancy sofa and chairs as and other lifestyle products.

"This is also about livelihood, self-respect and dignity," Jumamoy said.

TODAY'S many uses for the raffia

SCHOOL Gov. Erico Aumentado (center) his friends, and Sen. Jr. raffia hand-weaving during the Guinness bid launching.

ONE OF THEM WORKED AS A *SAGADA* TO FINISH SCHOOL.
ONE OF THEM IS A PROUD DAUGHTER OF A CARPENTER.
ONE OF THEM STRIVES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE WITHIN A SYSTEM.
ONE OF THEM ASPIRES TO BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT.

ALL OF THEM HAVE BIG DREAMS.

Congratulations to the 2009 TOSP awardees!

We salute the winners of this year's TOSP Award. Amidst various personal struggles, each one of you has proven that with passion, dedication, hard work, and optimism, the Filipino can succeed. May your personal and academic success serve as an inspiration to all the youth. Continue to dream big for yourself and for our country!

L-R: Roger Flores, Miguel Garcia, Aiko Belarmino, PLDT Vice Chairman Jose Cleto Collas, Philippine Founding Teacher/RFM Corporation President and Commander III Jose Cuneo Pepe Cuneo, Sharp Advertising, RFM Foundation Chairman Jose Concepcion Jr., Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, GMA Chairman Emmanuel Angeles, Adrian Mundin, National Bookstore President Alfredo Ramos, Stephen Antiporda, RFM Foundation President Mark Concepcion Kuang, Nicole Villarosa and Carlos Gonggalin Jr.

Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines Awardees:

Stacy Danika Sia
ABHRIER
AB Mass Communication
Ateneo University

"Community service is all about making a difference in the lives of the impending problems... leading our country in a better condition and in a better shape than we had first found it."

Paul John Bunahan Ganto
BSC Management
University of Cebu

"I am the oldest of five children and was raised by my single mother as my father died when I was four. I want to help Filipinos, especially the less privileged ones, by helping solve the country's problems starting with the grassroots level."

Miguel Antonio Barreto Garcia
AB Economics
University of San Carlos

"Entrepreneurship is one of the key elements of the country. We need more of it to create jobs and spread its wealth to MORE... and strengthen research. Research coupled with strong entrepreneurial skills can be an advantage in the Philippines."

Wycon Marie Ragner Villarga
BSC Marketing Management and AB Economics
De La Salle University

"There's no point in complaining. I am an advocate of disaster projects, environmentalism and medical missions. I believe in anything that helps improve our people's lives and the world we live in."

Carlos Ramos Gonggalin, Jr.
BSEd Math
West Negros University

"I worked as a people in a logistics company until my parents asked me to help out my family but I'm still determined. I know that I can help improve so no am called up here."

Stephen Amore Belleza
BS Accountancy
University of San Carlos

"I dream of one day becoming the President of the Philippines. The art to problems is to become the leader of our country. As a student leader, I am living Jollibee Star Stand is hope for our country."

Roger Mondejar Flores
BS Naval Science
Philippine Military Academy

"I want to educate public about the values of community building. It is not only about building dams and going on war ... it can also be about helping back on their hands and building homes."

Ann Mercedes Chuidi
BSED Physical Sciences
University of Northern Philippines

"Bold training, may magagawi para sa bayan. Sa first semester pa lang ay ito ang pinaka-challenging subject na nakatagpo, marami kami. What was stopping someone living in an island in Palawan from becoming a doctor? Ang hirap ng mga tanong ngunit may mga sagot din sa mga ito."

Abdel Paul Garcia Belarmino
BS Communication Arts
University of the Philippines Los Baños

"Ang Pilipino ay maparaan sa kahit na pambihirang sitwasyon. Kaliwa ang pamimeste sa mga pagkakataon na wala kaming kuryente, nakakapag-aral pa rin ako sa pagkakaroon ng mga lamp shade at ng ating ilaw."

Adrian Clark San Pascual Mendin
BS Management Engineering
Ateneo de Manila University

"I really want to push my country's economy to become economically competitive. What drives me is the idea of CSR and using my invention background to help communities to grow and develop into mature."

Congratulations also to the other finalists! All of you are the pride and future of our country!

2009 TOSP FINALISTS

Watch the TOSP Awarding Ceremonies on July 19, 2009 (Sunday) on NBN 4 at 9:15pm

NEWS

Underground river makes cut

RP's surviving entry in nature's wonders search reaches semi-finals

By Reinerio D. Avila
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, the country's single remaining entry in a web-based search for the seven new natural wonders of the world, has made it to the semifinal round of the ongoing selection process.

New7Wonders Foundation, the Switzerland-based organizer of the campaign, announced the 77 semifinal winners that made it on Thursday, after a year of e-mail-based voting where over one billion votes were cast on the Internet.

An international panel of experts will evaluate the remaining 77 sites and will select the 28 finalists to be announced on July 25, based on a set of criteria set by the organizers at the New7Wonders Foundation headquarters in Zurich.

A final round of Internet voting will then be held for another year until the seven winners are named in 2011.

Mayor confident

Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn said the city government, which has launched a full-blown campaign to solicit votes for the country's lone entry, is confident they will make it to the list of 28 finalists.

"We really pleased that we made it this far, even with little support from the national government, considering that we were competing with entries like the Amazon forest which is being supported by at least five countries," he added.

The underground river, a rare ecosystem that features a 24-kilometer navigable route underneath a limestone formation, has attracted hundreds of thousands of local and foreign visitors, particularly during the past two years when it was first nominated as one of the country's several entries to the global voting campaign.

It topped the first phase of the selection process during the first year of the campaign, that involved over 400 entries from all over the world, leading other previous Philippine nominees including the Tubbataha Reef, Bohol's Chocolate Hills, Mayon Volcano and several other entries.

THE PUERTO Princesa Subterranean River National Park is now surviving RP entry

Top 77

Also in the top 77 entries are popular natural attractions such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Brazil's Amazon forest, the Grand Canyon in Arizona, USA and Mt. Olympus in Greece, among others.

Organizers, however, noted that the nominee has included many places that are not known to the public.

"Unlike the campaign that chose the Official New 7 Wonders of the World, to which a majority of the participating monuments were universally known and recognized, there are many spectacular sites in the Official New7Wonders of Nature Top 77 that are not well known outside their country or region. The success of lesser-known locations show that an important New7Wonders goal in this campaign is being achieved—broadening the horizons of the voting public around the world, thus helping us all better appreciate the diversity of our planet," New7Wonders President Bernard Weber said in a statement.

The criteria for the final selection will include: unique beauty of the nominated site; diversity and distribution across and among the different site categories, including landscapes, ice formations, islands, mountains, volcanoes, caves, rock formations, valleys, forests, national parks, nature reserves, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, and municipal, ecological significance; historical legacy and geo-location.

Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Lhuillier

Doc in botched butt treatment hunted

NBI says surgeon who did job on woman trader had left Belo Group

SHABU DRUG RAID
A personnel of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency checks drug paraphernalia seized from two Chinese nationals in Room 912, Alonso Tower Residence, Alonso Street, Binondo, Manila, early Friday. Authorities believe some of the shabu were flushed out in a toilet bowl by the suspects who were arrested. LEONARDO SABUGA

By Tina D. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) is now looking for a former doctor of the Belo Medical Group (BMG) who reportedly performed a butt augmentation procedure on a 40-year-old businesswoman, who claimed to have experienced adverse effects a few years after the operation.

Ruel Rimando, executive officer of the Office of Deputy Director for Intelligence Services (DDIS), said Dr. Francis Decena, who reportedly performed the medical procedure on Josefina Sorio, is no longer affiliated with the BMG.

"We have to know his (Decena's) whereabouts as he can shed light on the matter," Rimando said, adding that BMG has already furnished the bureau with some of the complainant's medical records.

The complainant pointed to Dr. Vicki Belo, the clinic's medical director, as the one who reproduced medical assessment on Sorio, Rimando added.

"According to the complainant, Dr. Belo was the one who interviewed her prior to the procedure. She (Sorio) said it was Dr. Decena who performed the elective surgery for hydrogel bust implants on her," Rimando said.

The NBI official said they're also looking into the possible violation regarding the BMG advertisements on the Internet.

"The BMG web ad says that the hydrogel bust implants have no side effects, so we will check on this. We'll try to determine if there was deception involved as far as the clinic's advertisement is concerned," Rimando added.

A verification made with the Professional Regulation Commission confirmed that Decena has a medical license.

"He has a license but the PRC could not say his field of expertise. We would like to know if he has experience in this kind of procedure," Rimando said, adding that this is one of the bureau's investigation is to determine BMG's possible liability.

"The almost died. She said she has been in and out of the hospital and has been under the care of several doctors because her other parts of the body were apparently affected by the bacteria due to possible foreign substances," said Rimando.

The NBI added that they will interview other doctors who attended to Sorio during the procedure.

Jamb Salicrie, BMG media officer, confirmed in a statement that Sorio's had elective surgery for hydrogel bust implants at the Belo Clinic in 2003 with Decena as her attending physician.

"Four years later elapsed since her surgery. Currently, we were informed that Ms Sorio's had been confined at the St. Luke's Medical Center and she claims that her medical prob-

[MORE, A-8]

'Boratong conviction boosts Pasig drive vs illegal drugs'

By DJ Yap

THE MAYOR AND THE POLICE CHIEF OF Pasig City said on Friday the city's longstanding battle against illegal drugs got a major boost from the conviction of the operators of a "shabu triangle" (drug market) near the City Hall.

"With this, the police get more confidence because they saw that even big-time operators could get charged and convicted by the courts," Justice Sept. Napoleon Villegas, the officer in charge of the Pasig Police Station, told the Inquirer.

Mayor Robert Eusebio said in a radio interview he believed the conviction helped deter drug pushers from continuing their activities in the city, although he added that such activities had not yet stopped entirely.

Anale Ivanne Boratong and his second cousin Sheryl Mojica Boratong each were meted a life term on Thursday for violating anti-drug laws by Judge Abraham B. Borreta of the Pasig Regional Trial Court's Branch 154.

The two were found guilty of jointly running the drug market in Maupaya Compound on F. Soriano Street.

The court also ordered Boratong to pay P10 million in fines and his wife, Fe Infiesto Sheryl was also convicted of a separate charge of drug possession as she was found with 52.19 grams of illegal narcotics when the Maupaya Compound was raided by the police task force in February 2006.

Monitoring to continue

Villegas said the city police would continue its 24/7 monitoring and patrolling of Maupaya Compound. The police recently set up a unit in the compound that serves as an outpost and is manned by police officers and civilian watchers employed by City Hall.

Villegas said that with both Boratongs out of the picture, the drug operations would likely be continued by their cohorts in the organization.

He likened the drug syndicate to the communist New People's Army, in which slain leaders would quickly be replaced by somebody else.

Transport strike set on July 13 vs high oil prices, traffic fines

By Julie M. Aurelio

JEEPNEY DRIVERS WILL HOLD A TRANSport strike in Metro Manila and other parts of the country on Monday to protest the recent spate of oil price hikes and high fines on traffic violations.

Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston) secretary general George San Mateo said the strike will affect Metro Manila and select regions like Iloilo City, Cagayan de Oro, General Santos City, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Pasay and Guimaras.

"We hope to participate at least 80 percent of the transport sector here in Metro Manila," he said in an press conference yesterday in Quezon City.

The transport leader said they will hold the strike to condemn the recent oil price hikes implemented by the Big 3 companies—Shell, Caltex and Petron.

"We again call on the government to conduct an independent audit of the Big 3's books, especially after the Manila court ordered an appeal to stop the audit," San Mateo said.

He also urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to junk two orders of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) mandating high fines on erring jeepney drivers.

San Mateo particularly called for the junking of DOTC orders 2008-38 and 2008-38 supposedly mandating the high fines.

"These orders only intensify corruption in the streets because of the government's desire to increase its revenue collection at the expense of the poor jeepney drivers and operators," he added.

Meanwhile, private motorists were also asked to join in the transport strike by boycotting the Big 3's petrol products on the day of the strike itself.

SC lifts order stopping work on C-5 Road

By Norman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT HAS lifted the status quo order preventing the construction of the C-5 Road extension through Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) properties in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

In a resolution, the Court's First Division ordered to lift the status quo order "considering that no grave injustice and irreparable injury would arise."

The Court, nonetheless, would still deliberate the merits of the petition for injunction when all the parties submit their respective positions on the matter.

The Supreme Court issued the lifting of the status quo order after hearing the arguments on Monday of Barangay Old Balara chair Reda Torres-angeles, who is asking for a temporary restraining order on the project, and respondents the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the MWSS.

Torres-angeles, through lawyers Alfredo Villamor, is asking the court for a temporary restraining order on the project because it supposedly passes over decades-old aqueducts under the MWSS properties.

The project supposedly poses a danger to the aqueducts and to the district's water supply.

But the DPWH, government corporate counsel Alberto Agra said there is still an justiciable issue adding that the entity of the DPWH in the area was meant to conduct soil studies and not to start work on the construction project.

2 PNP execs sent Boratong to jail

ABDURAHAM BORATONG, THE spokesperson of the "shake shuggie" (drug lien market) near the Pasig City Hall, has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Boratong, the owner during drug trafficking, ran the drug market a spinning distance from the City Hall before it was raided by the police three years ago.

Lost in the euphoria over Boratong's conviction were the names of retired Director General Avelino Razon Jr. and Director Hilarion Ele Jr., who were then PNP (Philippine National Police) chief and PNP task force chief for illegal drugs, respectively.

The two should be given public acclaim for the raid on the compound on Shaggy-ass Street that enclosed numerous drug cartels and drug dens.

Together with Ebdane, they planned the raid via the exclusion of other top PNP officials (to avoid info leakage) after an informer, Erwin, and this columnist reported to Razon the existence of the thriving drug market.

Because there was an information leakage, the dominion of the hangar, including its customers, were caught unattended.

That said that Leandro, Ele, Erwin and I planned for weeks and it was expensive in police work.

• • •

I beg the readers' indulgence for the following self-serving paragraphs.

Erwin and I learned about the existence of the drug market from one of its customers who came to our office at the now defunct "Boardwalk inn (Tabi-Boardwalk)," a TV reality show that featured criminals and abusive cops.

We had a drug addict pose as a customer and furnished a mainstream TV camera in his pockets.

Because of that raid on the well-guarded drug market, which we shot from the pinning to execution, the ratings of our TV show zoomed up.

Erwin, Ruffy said I learned the reality TV drama.

A few months later, the government acquisitioned HPG 9, where "Boardwalk" was shown every Saturday, cancelled the program on orders from a very powerful figure.

I learned the ire of the powerful individual after I exposed his girlfriend's smuggling activities in this column.

• • •

If there are fewer crimes and less crime solution in Manila these days it's because closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras are installed in the city's main streets and crime-prone areas.

If Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, would have his way, all of Metro Manila's main streets, busy areas and crime-prone places would have CCTV cameras.

The installation of CCTV cameras in Manila is the brainchild of Rosales when he was still Manila police chief.

The TV monitors are at the Manila police headquarters.

It means that police patrol cars are in their assigned areas. Rosales had every patrol car installed with GPS (global positioning system) units that monitored their movements.

Even from now, Rosales still be harassing as the "father of the sophisticated method of crime prevention and solution" in the country.

Native trees to be planted on NLEx

By Allison M. Lopez

A JUNGLE WITHOUT A TREE could hardly be outright or tall.

That's why the "Puno Lions" of San Beda College's Mutual Association (SBCAP) decided to sponsor the urban jungle by planting trees along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) to help subsist and at the same time, raise funds for their indigent scholars.

The "Saving Highways" project, launched in Makati City on Wednesday, aims to plant 25,000 native trees on both shoulders of the 84-kilometer NLEx in the next two years and raise a total P50 million to fund the education of more scholars.

"One of the responsibilities of the Association is education. When you look at education as a logistic, as a heritage that will not be lost, it's very akin to the same life compared to other fund-raising activities like movies and concerts, a tree will always be a tree," said Sr. Junior Gabriel Tan, SBCAP president.

"We're investing in Filipino human resources. In the past... we have a choice. A tree will remain forever as long as you don't cut it," he added.

The first batch of trees will be planted at the NLEx entrance in Balintawak in front of SBCA partner Solar Resorts—its facilities led by FILET Group CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan.

Pangilinan became the project's first sponsor after his bid bought 10 km worth of trees that translates to a P5-million donation.

Gabriel Tan estimated that with inflation, the cost of funding a scholar from pre-school to college has grown to an astounding P1 million.

"If a million of the funds raised, he said, would support about 10 scholars while P20 million would go to the maintenance of the trees. "These scholars are really deserving. Some of them have become topnotchers in the bar and CPA licensure exams," he stressed.

Doc in botched butt ...

Kanlaon at 41

lous were issued by his surgery in 2005. While the BMC is concerned with the current medical condition since she was a fourteen patient, understandably, BMC has not had an opportunity to examine her. As such, we cannot properly comment on her medical status.

"Furthermore, the lapse of time and the supervening events that may have occurred after her surgery make it difficult to make any judgment on her medical status. Allow us to say that BMC will within the time for Ms Hontiveros and we pray further full and speedy recovery," Salvador added.

Nicanor said she spent around P250,000 for two butt enhancement procedures. She added she had undergone the operations to remove the infection and desire the pain on her behind. WILA Nancy Carvajal

Tax case vs Lloyd Cruz dismissed

By John M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY PROSECUTOR'S office has dismissed a complaint against actor John Lloyd Cruz filed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) after the actor allegedly failed to prove his non-earning records for 2004.

In a four-page resolution dated June 30 but only made public on Wednesday, city prosecutor Edmundo Fiscon Reyes junked the raps against Cruz for lack of probable cause.

Reyes pointed out that since the actor supplied under the BIR's Enhanced Voluntary Assessment Program (EVAP), he will not be subjected to an audit or, at least, will be the last priority in case an audit is done.

Cruz claimed he only learned that he was ineligible for the EVAP only 30 days after the deadline for availing the BIR regulations dictate that the evaluation need only take 30 days.

MetroBriefs

Summit vs vandalism

THE MUNICIPAL Police Station is planning to organize a summit on vandalism in an effort to ensure also the enforcement of public properties. Following an apparent rise in acts of vandalism in the city, barangay Tomas Magsaysay, the head of police, said the summit would be held tentatively on the first week of July. Magsaysay said Mayor Marcelino Fernandez was not pleased upon seeing defaced structures, particularly walls having the streets, around the city, and has given the police orders. In the situation, it would be held with school authorities, barangay officials, youth groups, including out-of-school youths, as well as leaders of fraternities and sorority. Dr. Tip

Depot assessor eyed

THE DOLE is all companies expect to have no more 'easier' from the panel that will choose the best party one season that will look into the safety measures at the Pantabangan depot in Nueva Ecija. Roberto Rampil, vice president for communications of Pinamar Steel Pantabangan, said that they would require the presidents of the Association of Workers in the panel, along with Manila city government, barangay officials, advocacy group, and Nueva Ecija Provincial Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Energy and the Metropolitan Development Authority. Nanael and reporter's they should spend the workers and visit. Amy P. Rosa

OMB has 2 witnesses

THE OFFICIAL Media Board (OMB) has declared it has two witnesses who claim to have seen the replacing radio media replacing machines being hacked over by several men last June 18. The replacing machines were seized on April 3 in a raid conducted by operatives of the OMB and the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group by virtue of a search warrant. OMB named the witnesses as security guard Pepe Belarmino and barangay chair Benito Bautista of Barangay San Antonio, San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, where the raided business located. The two have executed affidavits attesting to what they saw as the day the seized items were confiscated. The disappearance of the replacing machines has led to a heated exchange between the two agencies, which accused each other of covering up records for the loss.

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Dolby Digital E

S. Korea, US hit by new wave of cyber attacks

SEOUL—A THIRD WAVE OF cyber attacks hit South Korea on Thursday evening, blocking or impeding access to official and private websites, amid suspicions North Korea is its top culprit as it was during...

The US State Department said its websites were under attack for a fourth day as it tried to prevent further attacks after the White House and Pentagon websites were among 10 government entities targeted this week.

Officials, a South Korean discharge of antivirus software, had forecast the virus, which hit dozens of US and Korean sites in recent days, would return at 6 p.m. on Thursday and hit several domestic sites.

"The third attack was bigger than our office had predicted, affecting some of the sites also hit earlier in the week," a company official said.

The websites of parliament, the defense ministry, the foreign ministry and the National Intelligence Service were either responding slowly or shut down intermittently.

The largest bank, Shinhan, also said access to its website was blocked at one point and it was trying hard to normalize its internet banking.

Officials at the government's Korea Information Security Agency said Sunday news agency the damage appeared less serious on Thursday thanks to increased efforts to combat the problem.

Hackers have planted the virus in thousands of personal computers in South Korea and overseas. In what is called a "distributed denial of service" (DDoS), they are programmed to swamp certain websites at selected times.

In a sign of further disruption to come, Seoulup quoted the Korea Communications Commission (KCC) as saying that tens of thousands of virus-contaminated personal computers "appear automatically programmed to destroy their own stored data starting next Friday."

The KCC said the virus was set to destroy the data of at least 20,000 contaminated PCs across South Korea.

The report added that government agencies and private network security firms said they have identified and closed four overseas-based internet sites from suspected of participating in the latest wave of attacks.

The White House, State Department and Pentagon websites were among governments entities targeted this week in the United States, experts said, along with private businesses.

In response, the South Korean military said an information security command will be installed on Jan. 1, two years earlier than planned.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said 11 South Korean and 14 US organizations were hit in the first wave early this week.

It said a second wave of attacks on Wednesday was aimed at domestic banks and a network solutions provider.

The NIS has not publicly suggested who is executing the attacks.

But it told members of parliament's intelligence committee that it believes the North or its sympathizers may be to blame.

The North has staged a number of test and numerous missile launches in recent weeks, raising regional tensions. A cyber attack, if confirmed, would be a new tactic. AFP

Frenemy, locavore, vlogs: New words in Webster's

SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts—Do you use a web page post to recently keep track of your frenemies?

Plan to spend your staycation with a blog chat and text blunder? Or perhaps you plan to signal a flash mob for a quick bite of chumscrum.

If you're not entirely certain what all that means, turn to the latest edition of the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, which has added about 100 new words that largely reflect changing trends in American society.

John Morse, president and publisher of the Springfield-based dictionary publishers, said many of this year's new words are tied to changes in technology, an increasing environmental awareness and aging baby boomers' concerns about their health and have become part of the general lexicon.

"There are not new words in the language, by any means," Morse said. "What's when people like [neuroscientist and 'mind-expansion' show up in the Collegiate, it's because we've made the judgment that those are not just words used by specialists... Those really are words more likely to show up in The New York Times, in The Wall Street Journal."

There are words such as locavore (one who eats foods grown locally), frenemy (someone who acts like a friend but is really an enemy), waterboarding (an interrogation technique designed to simulate the sensation of drowning), sloga (a blog that contains video material) and webisode (a TV show that can be viewed as a website).

There's also flash mob (a group of people summoned electronically to a designated spot at a specified time to perform an indicated action before dispersing) and green collar (involving activities for protecting the natural environment).

The term "tuck puppet"—a faux online identity used by disgruntled employees (online) to 1999 feel fair taken on new popular cue with people using fake IDs on social networking sites.

Many words have even existed since, including chumscrum (a sandwich of sliced hamcrumpet (cupcake/muffin) and veggarge (crude/ that combines rap and Caribbean rhythms).

Some words, such as "blogchat," have become so popular the dictionary could not ignore them, Morse said. Some joke refers to saying home for mcmansion and has gained popularity as the economy worsens. AP

Thousands flee possible bloodshed in Urumqi

A CHINESE soldier stands guard at a tower of a mosque in Urumqi in China's Xinjiang region on July 10. Ethnic tension is expected to shift from the streets to mosques on Friday, with many Uighur Muslims saying the authorities would not let them observe their main day of prayer. AFP/STR

URUMQI, CHINA—THOUsands of fearful people poured into bus and train stations on Friday to escape China's Urumqi city after deadly ethnic unrest...

Authorities said they had put on extra bus services out of the capital of China's remote Xinjiang region, but demand far outstripped seats and soldiers said they were charging up to five times the normal bus price for tickets.

"It is just too risky to stay here. We are scared of the violence," said Bo Qingen, 23, a construction worker from central China who had been living in Urumqi for five years and was trying to buy a bus ticket out with his wife.

The ensuing violence between Uighur Muslims, who have long complained about repression under Chinese rule, took to the streets in three thousands to protest, and security forces moved in to clamp down.

The Chinese government said 156 people were killed and more than 1,000 others injured, as Uighurs attacked people from China's dominant Han ethnic group.

But Uighur exiles said security forces overreacted to peaceful protests and used deadly force. They said up to 800 people may have died in the unrest, including the security crackdown.

The tensions continued early in the week as thousands of Han Chinese took to the streets wielding makeshift poles, meat cleavers and other makeshift weapons venting vengeance against the Uighurs.

AFP witnessed four Chinese males assaulting two Uighurs in separate attacks, and Uighurs alleged many other beatings and killings had occurred in the violence throughout the week was unclear.

With ethnic tensions still at flashpoint and security forces swarming the city, many residents were ordered shut for weekly prayers.

"The government said there would be no Friday prayers," said a Uighur man named Tursun outside the Hanzigli mosque, one of the oldest in the capital, as about 1,000 policemen carrying machine guns and batons stood guard nearby.

"There's nothing we can do... the government is afraid that people will use religion to support the those forces."

He was referring to a Chinese government term referring to terrorists, separatists and secretists—forces it says are working to split Xinjiang from the rest of the country.

Xinjiang makes up one-sixth of China's territory and is crossed into Central Asia, abutting borders with eight countries including Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Eight million Uighurs make up just under half of Xinjiang's population. AFP

UBS fights disclosure of clients' names

WHEN THE SWISS BANK UBS AND federal prosecutors face off in a Florida courtroom on Monday, the main focus will be whether UBS must disclose the identities of thousands of its American clients, but much more could be at stake as well.

The dispute, in which the IRS, backed by the Justice Department, is trying to force UBS to hand over the names of 52,000 wealthy American clients suspected of tax evasion, has escalated into a showdown that has frayed relations between Switzerland and the United States, pushed bank lawyers of Swiss banking secrecy and rattled the world's private banking industry. UBS and the Swiss have intensified their opposition this week, threatening to send many ripples through the global banking system.

Oswald J. Grubel, chief executive of UBS, sent a memorandum to the bank's top executives on Thursday saying that turning over the names "would require UBS to violate Swiss criminal law, and we deeply cannot comply."

The Swiss government said on Wednesday it would block any move by UBS to turn over the names should it be ordered to do so. Such a decision could come as early as Monday by the judge overseeing the case. Switzerland contends that compliance with such an order would violate its laws.

Any such decision could imperil the ability of UBS, the world's largest private bank and a big player in the global credit markets, to operate, as well as potentially subject executives to criminal prosecution, and the bank is sanctions, in Switzerland.

The judge overseeing the case, Alan S. Gold of US District Court in Miami, has ordered prosecutors and the IRS to consult the Obama administration and the State Department and to explain by Sunday how far the government is willing to go if UBS refuses to disclose the names. The judge wants to know whether it would consider seizing US assets of UBS or force it into receivership.

On Wednesday, the IRS used UBS to compel it to turn over the names, just a day after UBS agreed to pay $780 million to settle criminal accusations that it had defrauded the IRS by allowing wealthy Americans to hide billions of dollars in taxes in secret offshore bank accounts. The bank admitted to wrongdoing.

The controversy has threatened to rift the veil of Swiss banking secrecy, which has driven a vast wealth preservation industry that has made Switzerland the world's largest repository of hidden wealth. NYT

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US demand fuels spike in small arms trade, UN survey reveals

GENEVA—BALLOONING US DEmand and the fraudgent's surge in popularity drove up the global trade in small arms by more than a quarter between 2000 and 2006, a UN-backed study showed on Thursday.

Those weapons in the hands of civilians, security forces or armed groups were behind the deaths of 490,000 people, said the authors of the Small Arms Survey 2009.

Pistols, revolvers, rifles and heavy machine guns accounted for 60 percent of all the illegal ammunition, or tens of any kind, including the use of bombs, knives or bare hands, whether in conflicts or crime, the experts said.

By 2006, the legal market for small arms and light weapons was worth $2.9 billion, a leap of more than $600 million on the year, they based on customs data collected by the UN from 53 countries.

Demand from the United States alone was responsible for 46 percent of the worldwide increase in imports, it found.

The real figure for the total global market was most likely to be above $4 billion, since flawed countries and a lack of transparency in some countries were taken into account, according to the survey.

"Current data shows the global trade in small arms and light weapons is robust and even expanding, and that handguns are driving it," said survey program director Keith Krause.

"We don't know whether these weapons are destined for civilians, police or military forces. But it is striking that handguns have surpassed all other small arms and light weapons over the period."

The United States was by far the biggest importer of pistols and revolvers, accounting for 34 percent or $173 million of imports over the six year period.

Yet, during that period the overall trade in military small arms and light weapons declined to the United Nations fell from $520 million to $370 million.

The US was only the sixth largest military importer even though it has classified more pistols and revolvers for its armed forces come predominantly from foreign gun-makers.

The top exporters in 2006 for small arms, light weapons, parts and ammunition were the United States, Germany, Brazil, Austria and Belgium.

The survey argued that there was considerable scope to destroy 200 million small arms currently in circulation in the world.

"Roughly 40 percent of state armouries—some 75 million arms—appear to be surplus to requirements and highly suitable for destruction," the report said.

"Collection and destruction seems readily feasible for perhaps 20 percent of all civilian firearms." AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ducos

No deal in Honduran rivals' dialogue

SAN JOSE—HONDURAS' RIVAL LEADERS abandoned mediated talks on Thursday without a deal, as Costa Rican President Oscar Arias appealed for more time to resolve the crisis sparked by a military-backed coup last month.

Deposed leader Manuel Zelaya and Micheletti left San Jose without meeting his rival, President Manuel Zelaya, after talks aimed at finding middle ground between the new president, who insists he will stay in power, and the elected president, who is urging his reinstatement.

Pick Arias, then Micheletti spoke separately to Arias, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, as his home in the capital San Jose. But the pair did not speak face-to-face as expected.

"I feel satisfied" because a sincere, clear dialogue has been initiated, but still, the positions are very different and certainly these things... take time, they require patience," said Arias.

"This could possibly take more time than imagined."

On his return to Tegucigalpa, Micheletti said he was ready to return to talks "if necessary" after earlier saying he was going back to Honduras "totally satisfied."

"If I am invited by President Arias, I will return with great pleasure," Micheletti said, after having a working team of four negotiators behind in San Jose. Meetings between the two delegations began shortly after his departure.

On Friday, the exiled leader was expected to travel to Guatemala and the Dominican Republic to drum up support, according with president Rafael Colom and Leonel Fernandez under the auspices of the Central American Integration System (SIA).

The unprecedented Central American country of seven million inhabitants has been roiled by protests since June 28, when Zelaya was abducted by the army and forcibly deported.

"We have made the first step," Zelaya said after his meeting. "Presidents Arias heard my position and that of the unions and political representatives with me, which is the immediate restoration of the elected president."

The United States has suspended military ties with Tegucigalpa and is warning it could sever $200 million in aid. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have frozen credit lines.

Zelaya's left-wing affiliates have also made life uncomfortable for Micheletti. Protesters has suspended its oil deliveries to Honduras, while Nicaragua denied Micheletti permission to fly through its airspace for the Costa Rica meeting.

Amid the tensions, there was speculation that a deal was near open to a possible solution.

The Honduran Supreme Court said ahead of the talks that if the congress granted Zelaya's amnesty, he could return to Honduras without fearing an arrest warrant for treason hanging against him.

Some Honduran lawmakers said they were open to an amnesty. AFP

China quake flattens 18,000 homes, kills 1

BEIJING—EMERGENCY OFFICIALS WERE evacuating more than 400,000 people on Friday after an earthquake hit southwest China, killing one person, injuring hundreds and flattening more than 18,000 homes.

A government relief official in Sichuan county, a mountainous area of picturesque Tibetan provinces, said one person had died and 328 had been injured.

The US Geological Survey said the moderate 5.7-magnitude quake struck at 7.19 p.m. on Thursday at a shallow depth of 10 km in Sichuan province.

"I was harvesting tobacco leaves... when the quake hit. I felt dizzy and saw villagers falling over. Many houses collapsed," Dong Zhaobi, a farmer in Baoxin county told the Xinhua news agency.

A 50-year old woman was buried in the debris of collapsed homes and died later in hospital from serious blood loss, Xinhua said, citing local officials.

The quake was centered on a relatively sparsely populated area 90 km east-southeast of the city of Dali.

Eight aftershocks followed, driving residents outdoors into the warm night for fear of greater tremors, said Xinhua.

More than 38,000 houses collapsed and over 75,000 others were damaged in six counties of Yunnan, with 30 people suffering serious injuries, it said.

Over 1,000 soldiers and police officers, including about 300 from neighboring Sichuan Province, were helping residents to safety, Xinhua said, adding that provincial authorities were sending tents, quilts and other aid supplies.

Last year in Sichuan, nearly 87,000 people were left dead or missing when a massive 8.0 magnitude earthquake shook the province in China's mountainous northwest.

The deadliest earthquake to strike China in over 30 years flattened entire cities and towns, destroying nearly 50,000 villages. AFP

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama, right, and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi shake hands during the G8/G5 summit in L'Aquila, Italy, on July 9, a sight unthinkable just a few years ago. Tensions for many years over Libyan support for groups Washington considers terrorist, US-Libyan ties have thawed in recent years. —

Group of 8 is not enough, say outsiders

L'AQUILA, ITALY—THE GROUP OF EIGHT was simple power politics. Economic troubles prompted the most powerful democracies to convene a summit meeting to determine the future of the world, or at least as much of it as they could.

It worked well enough that they did it again the next year. And the next. More countries joined, and more began banging on the door. Eventually, the so-called Group of Eight turned into what might be considered academic clubs. And that was how they ended up with a meeting on Thursday that was actually dubbed the G-8 (Plus) 5 (Plus) 1 (Plus) 5.

The group's 25th gathering is such a sprawling event that the leaders of about 40 countries invited here for it. President Barack Obama headed one meeting with 17 leaders for what he called a major Economies Forum because there would be no joint grappling with climate change without, say, China and India.

He called the Group of Eight to a Group of 20 model?

As a first-time Group of Eight participant, Obama seems to have a skeptical ear, uncertain about its suitability as a vehicle for solving the world's problems. This year's meeting produced statements on the economy, Iran, the Middle East and other topics but made few breakthroughs, and Obama's aides cast it as a stern way between Group of 20 meetings.

The developing countries of the Group of 20 are the days of the smaller club are numbered. "The G-8 is seen as a political decision group," Celso Amorim, Brazil's foreign minister, said last month at a conference in Paris.

Still, talk of restructuring or scrapping the Group of Eight invariably runs into resistance from current members. At the opening night, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, the host, said the summit meeting was "ideal for building confidence and cordiality, for creating friendships and deepening friendships."

John Kirton, director of the Group of Eight/Summit Group at the University of Toronto, said the group was likely to evolve with additional formats involving more countries. But he said the core eight still represented unrivaled political and economic power and had the duty to weigh in on issues of democracy that others could not.

"There's a lot that the eight can do that the others can't," he said. "You'll always need the G-8." AFP

Study: French are world's worst tourists

PARIS—PUSHY PENCHERS, RUDE AND terrible at foreign languages: French people are the worst tourists around, according to a study of the global hotel industry released on Thursday.

Carried out last month by TNS Infratest, the study asked 40,000 hotels worldwide to rank tourists from 27 countries based on nine criteria, from their politeness to their willingness to tip.

Clients and duty polite, quiet and conscientious, Japanese tourists came top of the crop for the third year running.

At the other end of the spectrum, French holidaymakers and business travelers were the least generous or ready to tip, and ranked next-to-last for their overall behavior and politeness.

Pushy French travelers made scientific elegance—chimed Odile—as well as for their discretion and cheerfulness.

But the French were the least ready to try a new language, within UK tourists who were most likely to swallow their pride and order a pizza, baguette or a paella in the local lingo.

UK tourists also got top marks for generosity—as the biggest spenders and tippers—but fell short on other counts as the least tidy, the loudest, the worst complainers, and the most badly dressed.

Despite clichés about beer-guzzling hordes descending on Mediterranean resorts each summer, Britons came a respectable second to their overall behavior, politeness, quietness and even elegance—second for dress sense only to the Italians.

But the tastier Japanese were followed by Canadians as the least likely to whinge when a trip goes wrong.

France's rivals for the "worst tourist" tag, Spaniards and Greeks came more than ten rows of the pack in almost every category. AFP

Iranians take to the streets anew despite warnings

CAIRO—THOUSANDS OF IRANIANS poured into the streets of Tehran on Thursday, clapping, chanting, almost mocking the authorities as they once again defied not to large numbers in defiance of the government's threat to crush their protests with violence.

At least gas canisters crashed and burned in the middle of crowds, and baton-wielding police officers chased protesters up and down sidewalks, several people, some bloodied, into the cover, but there was an almost festive feeling on the streets of Tehran, witnesses reported in e-mail exchanges.

A young woman, her clothing covered in blood, said, "I am not scared, because we are in this together."

The protesters set trash afire in the streets, and shopkeepers locked their gates, then let demonstrators in to escape the wrath of the police. Streets also served as safe havens, letting in protesters and looking out the authorities.

It has been almost four weeks since the polls closed and the government announced that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won re-election in a landslide.

And there have been almost four weeks of defiance, in the face of the government's repeated and violent efforts to restore the status quo. The government did succeed in keeping people off the streets in the period 11 days.

But there was an opening to take to the streets again on Thursday in a collective show of defiance, and many protesters seized it, even though the principal opposition leaders stayed away. Mir Hussein Mousavi, who claims that he was the victim of another landslide, Mehdi Karroubi, and former President Mohammad Khatami have agreed to pursue their complaints through the legal system and to protest only when a permit is issued.

The day was supercharged from the start, with a protest called for 4 p.m. to honor the students who 10 years earlier were bloodied and killed during a violent confrontation with the police.

Police officers in riot gear patrolled the streets in roving bands of about 50. Then the crowds started to form, parking the sidewalks. Traffic stopped and drivers honked or stopped from their cars in solidarity. The people chanted, "Down with the dictator," "God is great" and "Mouse-a-vi" as they walked along Revolution Street. NYT

SIGN APPETIT
ODIN, a white Bengal tiger, dines for a piece of meat at the opening of the new Odin's Temple of the Tiger exhibit in Vallejo, Calif. on July 9. —

Claims tally tops 15,400 in fraud by Madoff

MADOFF —

THE FINAL TALLY OF CLAIMS from victims of Bernard L. Madoff's vast Ponzi scheme comes to more than 15,400, substantially higher than the 8,000 claims that had been filed by the first of June.

The total was included in an interim report filed on Thursday in Federal Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan by Irving H. Picard, the trustee overseeing the liquidation of Madoff's estate.

The report, which covers the first six months of the trustee's tenure, also provided some limited details about his independent reconstruction of the Madoff fraud, which continues to be investigated by federal prosecutors and securities regulators.

So far, more than 60 "potential corporate users and insiders" have been identified in the United States and in 11 countries or territories, from Switzerland to the Cayman Islands, according to the report. The investigations has also turned up cases in which money flowed from the Madoff accounts into companies to which neither Madoff nor his firm had any apparent ownership interest, the trustee reported.

The final total of claims by Madoff's victims was pushed up in June by a last-minute flood of applications before a July 1 deadline.

The claims tally adds a new metric to the enormous fraud, which was already remarkable for the amount of paper profits reaped: $64.8 billion, the amount of profit that flowed through the Ponzi scheme since its inception ($17.91 billion) and the number of years the fraud continued undetected (nearly 20).

Given the scale of customer claims, the trustee warned that he "does not currently believe that there will be sufficient funds in the debtor's estate" to pay the unsecured claims. NYT

1 in 3 of breast cancer patients overtreated

LONDON—ONE IN THREE breast cancer patients identified in public screening programs may be treated unnecessarily, a new study says.

Rikesh Zeigmond and Nina Gonzalez of the Nordic Conference Centre in Copenhagen analyzed breast cancer trends at least seven years before and after screening programs for breast cancer started in parts of Australia, Sweden, Canada, Norway and Denmark.

The research was published Friday in the BMJ, formerly known as the British Medical Journal. Zeigmond and Gonzalez did not cite any funding for their study.

Cancers in screening programs began, more cases of breast cancer were inevitably picked up, the study showed. If a screening program is working, there should also be a drop in the number of advanced cancers cancer detected in older women, since their cancers should have already been caught earlier when they were screened. AP

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Bombers blast Generals, gain share of NCAA lead /A22

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa ● Assistant Editor Francis T. I. Ochoa

■ Cancellara keeps slim Tour lead /A23

Filipinos sweep opening singles

CECIL Mamiit caps Filipinos' impressive day.

THAT I-hop scored MVP Clint Capponi' first win.

Huey, Mamiit give Khans no room to shine

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES SWEPT TIE OPENING singles yesterday against a Pakistani side orphaned by its top player to move one win away from clinching their Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group 2 tie before a full house at the Philippine Columbian Association court.

Treat Huey drew first blood against Pakistan's top player Aqeel Khan, 6-4, 7-5, 6-2, before fellow Filipino-American Cecil Mamiit teamed to a worry-free 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 triumph over a flustered Khalil Khan later in the evening as the Philippines inched closer to a promotional tie for Group 1.

Though 05 Davis and French Open Al-caniera were timed to today's doubles at 3 p.m., there's a possibility that non-playing captain Cris Cuarto may field Mamiit and Huey to wrap up the best-of-five tie.

A win would send the Filipinos against the winner of the Indonesia-New Zealand tie in Hamilton, where the host Kiwis also led, 2-0.

The Pakistanis arrived here minus top gun Aisam Qureshi, who opted to play in the United States. Qureshi was pivotal in their tie-clinching win which they capped with a 4-1 win in Oman last March.

And that showed in the way they played last night.

Playing confidently before a local crowd for the first time, the 22-year-old Huey teamed on a steady baseline game to win his first over Davis Cup singles match.

"I think I played well. I hit a lot of forehands running around and making him (Khan) work," said Huey, a regular visitor of his mother's country of birth during his break from school at University of Virginia. "It's definitely great to play in front of a lot of people."

Huey's three-week practice at the soft and slippery shell courts paid off as the 6-foot sculptor came up with a slew of lefthand winners to handily take first set.

"I only played shell court since last Sunday but it's like clay only faster. I can slide and move well," he said.

The 30-year-old Khan went to the net in the second set and took a 5-3 lead after breaking Huey twice. But the Pakistani lost his touch just as fast and Huey rallied to win the next four games.

"He's (Khan) a great player and didn't go down easily," said Huey who finished the job in two hours and 28 minutes.

Bombers blast Generals, gain share of NCAA lead

By Cedelff Tejan

JOHN WILSON SPEARHEADED A SIZ-zling offensive as Arellano University overpowered Emilio Aguinaldo College, 83-69, yesterday to claim a share of the lead in the 85th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the FEDD Flying V Arena in San Juan.

"We stood in this game," said coach Ariel Vanguardia of Wilson, who finished with 22 points in the Honey Bombers' fed the time before Hugs on top with a 3-0 record.

The Bombers decided the game after the third quarter when they took a 64-44 lead but Vanguardia later used the last that EAC outscored his foes in the fourth period.

Magnus earlier better out of the game hard and sustained it by shooting until the final buzzer to a 10-0 Almonte run over the Angeles University Foundation Great Danes.

The easy victory was a welcome change for the Carlbuds, who packed up their record to 1-2 and gained a share of fifth along with Letran and UST.

"We executed very well today," said Magnus coach Chito Victolero, whose squad was coming off a blowout loss to San Beda and a narrow defeat to St. Benilde. "The beauty of the offense is that everyone has equal opportunities to score and I'm glad that everyone stepped up today."

Wilson led most of the damage in the first and third periods, where he scored 17 of his total output. The fourth-year forward also grabbed 13 rebounds, notched three steals and had an unassisted two-point basket.

After the Generals tied the game at 32 on Rastil Brot's triple late in the second period, the Bombers tightened their defense and went to Wilson and Marvin Hayes, who combined for 15 in a 23-5 blast to the third period.

Dexter Armand Black Scottie came off the bench to score 21 points, built on 4-of-6 shooting from beyond the arc, to post 23 minutes, while unheralded forward Tonio Corsido contributed 12 points for the Carlbuds, who held

CHARA Onidaro of EAC wears the ball away from a driving Mandalupes of EAC in the fourth quarter of yesterday's game in the FEDD Flying V Arena. RAFFERTY ANG

Asistio back on top after Malarayat victory

ANTONIO ASISTIO SETTLED DOWN with a one under par 71 to top the first half of the 100-hole Petro Gazz qualifier at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course in Lipa City yesterday.

Asistio, who started with a 69 in the first round but faltered with a 73 Thursday, bounced back from a bogey on No. 2 with three straight birdies from No. 3 then added one more birdie against two bogeys to finish with a 35-36 card.

Also known as Tonito and Tonton, Asistio romped to within 7 under 209 to tied in ending the first of two 54-hole elimination conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines in cooperation with SK Hydrocyte, which hosted the event for first through Mike Cate.

Asistio will take a one-stroke margin over ICTSI teammate Wilfredo Parcon, who matched par 72 Sunday into the second half of the qualifier at 8 birdies Lingat layout on July 13 to 15.

The top four players after the last three rounds of the qualifier will make it to the 80 squad competing in the Petro Gaz slated Aug. 13 to 23 in Thailand.

Rayos, who gained a piece of the lead Thursday with a 66, missed for a triple bogey seven on the opening hole by Being six shots to 2:00.

Dexter Villabet, another ICTSI bet, shot a 70 for a share of third with a charging Ronnel Abobo of Calatagan, who rolled sub-to 68 for 213, six shots off Asistio.

Stripping national champion Mark Fernando, who of Calatagan, shot a 73 and did to 68th at 218.

Also Ray Abdon fired a 71 and rested sixth at 219 while former Hong Kong Amateur Open champion Dante Bedonia and Abbo Alejandro will have a lot of catching up to if Stevens to gain a crack at the 80 team berths.

Bevinnes made a 73 for 220 while Alejandro had a 76 and fell to eighth with 227 in a tie with Dino Villanueva (74) and Alvin Regino (77).

Asian Kart Open at Carmona next week

THE PHILIPPINES PLAYS HOST TO ASIA'S best karters in the 2009 Asian Karting Open Championship Series and Magnolia Poon Asian Karting Super Series set July 17 to 19 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Over 75 karters from the Philippines, Macau, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong are competing.

Participants will dispute titles in the Intra-ROK, Mini-ROK, Yamaha Cup Junior, Yamaha Cup Senior, Honda Mini Unisex, Senior and Veteran, ROK Senior, ROK Junior, Formula 125 Open Junior and the Formula 125 Open Senior divisions.

Reigning Asian ROK champion Arie Toreh of Bandi2Race heads the hosts' charge against defending Asian Karting champion King Tin Sehiul of Thailand and Open Anthony Mamoth of Indonesia.

The Thai champ will be backed up by Simon Racing teammate Pedri Acevedo of Indonesia, who is supported by Go-kings Motorsport teammates Jens Ricardo Erlard, and Andi Arandha Tatan Ishik.

Sehiul ruled the Macau kickoff leg but shares the lead with Sandhi with 35 points after the Filipino-set topped the pair first race.

BEST Center clinics get going July 25

THE METRO-AMATEUR BEST CENTERS Saturday-only clinics finally comes off the wrap on July 25 in four Metro Manila venues—Malate Catholic School, Xavier School, Ateneo Covered Courts and Assumption College, San Lorenzo (Makati).

Originally scheduled to kick off on July 4, the clinics were moved because of the suspension of regular school classes.

Enrollees will attend three cage classes until Sept. 12, according to the organizing BEST Center and sponsoring Mito.

Saturday-only clinics started last July 5. Last day for enrollment is on Sunday.

Among BEST Center's featured grassroots are Paolo Mendoza, Lu Torres Jr., JV Teng, Chris Tiu, Jonas Villanueva and Eddie Bugia.

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CHRIS AND JAPOT'S SHOW Local sports icons Chris Tiu (left) and Japan Lizardo grace the Mito booth at the recent Joy of Wellness Fair, an activity promoting good physical and mental health through proper diet and exercise. Organized by Nestlé Philippines, Inc. at SM Megamall, the fair gave fans a chance to test their hoops skills against Chris via a free throw shoot-out and other activities. Other highlights of the affair included an exhibition by students of the Association for the Advancement of Ramanda and the Mito Beat Centre.

RTU cagers 2nd in Penang

PENANG, MALAYSIA—RIZAL TECHNOLOGical University put up a heave mural before bowing to the Malaysian national team, 92-90, and finishing second to the 2009 Penang Daily Chief Basketball Minister Friendship Cup invitational basketball tournament at the Han Chiang Centre Stadium.

A few days after winning the second baton Sellanik Development basketball championship in Kuala Lumpur, the Manilabeying-based Blue Thunders held their ground against the softer and more experienced Malaysians in a tightly-fought contest.

The Penanging team-mentored NDU five another sour cues (Romeo Dupat, 86-84, and Indira, 87-80, to set up a 11-time championship against their host rivals.

"I think the team did very well considering this is our first time to compete as a team abroad," said RTU president and head of delegation Dr. Ani Rita Orillos.

Bobby Gelig, Tiwan Pagulan, Eduardo Dagatong, Julius Bagasin and Jayvee Alo provided the offensive muscle for the Blue Thunders, who kept their guard down despite the Malaysians' tremendous height edge.

Riviera hosts WGAP fourth leg

ALABANG HOMES ITSELF UP FOR ANOTHER title defense as the Women's Golf Association of the Phils. (WGAP) settle a third century to the private class when the Circuit resumes on July 13 and 14 at the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

The Alabang golfers, led by Venni Chelus and Jessa Schuster, have dominated the Class A field with two wins in three legs, including a seven-point romp over Tagaytay Highlands in the Villanova leg last month.

As in the Villanova leg, the organizing WGAP said the double leg on Riviera will be held for two days due to the big number of participants.

Aside from Tagaytay, Forest Hills, Sta. Elena and defending overall champion Canlubang are also expected to go all out in stopping the Sting.

Other competing teams are Mick Wood, Valley Golf, Manila Golf, Riviera, Manila Southwood, Orchard, Phil. Navy and Ayalaalabs.

The competition in Classes A, B and C calls for a maximum of 10 players for each squad with the best four scores under the Modified Stableford system counting.

The Macintosh-Forest round topped two of the division in the Individual leg at home from scored a pair of runner-up finishes in the second leg at Forest Hills.

SPORTSWATCH

Verdasco leads Spanish Cuppers vs Germans

MADRID—FERNANDO VERDASCO IS ready to carry the weight of expectation for Spain when the Davis Cup holder faces Germany in the quarterfinals without Rafael Nadal.

Nadal withdrew his ranked out Nadal for the second time in three Davis Cup contests, with the four-time French Open champion having missed the final ties in Argentina and a similar injury.

Captain Albert Costa has put his faith in Verdasco, who opens against the unseeded Andreas Beck on the outdoor clay on Friday for the first of three scheduled matches.

"It's going to be hard if I play three matches but I think I'm ready for this. If the captain needs me," Verdasco said on Thursday. "I will play for sure." AP

Panama, Mexico draw; brawl mars match

HOUSTON—PANAMA HELD MEXICO to a 1-1 draw in a Gold Cup match on Thursday night that ended in chaos after a confrontation between Mexican coach Javier Aguirre and a Panamanian player triggered fights between fans.

Tempers flared throughout the match and bottles flew in the fifth minute.

Panama's Ricardo Phillips dribbled out of bounds in front of the Mexico bench and when the linesman stopped play, Phillips shoved Aguirre.

Phillips was escorted off by police and yelled in Aguirre's face before shoving Aguirre's assistant coach Antonio Mohamed. Aguirre also appeared to shove Phillips. AP

Australian GP head: No top teams, no race

MELBOURNE—MOTOR RACING CHIEF Paul Little thinks Australia's next round of the Formula One race at Albert Park Formula 1 Grand Prix will not compete in 2010 is ruled out.

"The contract expires in August. Ecclestone didn't turn up at the Australian Open so it became a forced decision when it came to the Melbourne Cup," Ecclestone told reporters interviews. "It's the same scenario. The organizers will tickets." AP

CHAMPS: Lance Armstrong (left) and Alberto Contador of Team Astana ride in the yellow jersey during the 15th stage of the Tour de France from Pau to Bagneres-de-Bigorre, France, on Thursday. AP

Cancellara keeps slim Tour lead

BARCELONA, SPAIN—SWISSWAY'S THOR HUSHOVD DEFIED THE RAIN AND the treacherous conditions to win the ninth stage of the Tour de France in a mass sprint finish on Thursday.

Fabian Cancellara of Switzerland kept the yellow jersey, with just a split-second lead over seven-time champion Lance Armstrong after the race crossed Spain with a 181.5-kilometer (112.8-mile) trek from Girona to Barcelona.

Hushovd, of the Cervelo team, celebrated his seventh Tour stage win by edging out two Spaniards—three-time world champion Oscar Freire in second, and Jose Joaquin Rojas in third.

"I'm just me, no happy!" said Hushovd, who won the best sprinter's jersey at the 2005 Tour. "It's true that it was a nervous day too, because it was raining and the roads were slippery."

They finished 4 hours, 11 minutes, 31 seconds for the stage, the same time as 46 other riders including Armstrong and Cancellara to the main pack of favorites.

Breakaway riders including Britain's David Millar expressed by remained, only to be reeled in by the finish. He was caught with three more than nine kilometers (5.6 miles) left to go.

The pack set off at a swift pace of about 47 kilometers (29 miles) an hour for the first 25 kilometers. Breakaways attempts by riders such as Americans David Zabriskie and George Hincapie were quickly reeled in by the peloton.

There was no other excuse for the lead or to the breakaway group for about three-quarters of the stage, and at one point had enough of a gap on Cancellara to be the overall leader in mid-stage.

Two crashes caused the last 10 kilometers (6 miles)—one involving Japanese rider Yukiya Arashiro, another involving former world champion Tom Boonen of Belgium, one of Hushovd's main rivals.

The three-week race enters a new phase on Friday with the first big mountains in the seventh stage.

"Tomorrow is an important day" Armstrong said. "I don't know if it's the most important day, but it is definitely a big appointment on the Tour."

The 224.8-kilometer (139.2-mile) ride from Barcelona to Arcalis, features, leaves the contest including the Category 1 Serra Sea pass, and an uphill finish on one of cycling's toughest climbs.

Alberto Contador, 2007 Tour champion and pre-race favorite, has said he's eager to make his move to the mountains.

Cancellara has been the only man to wear the yellow jersey this year. Armstrong is only millisecond behind, while Contador is third, 19 seconds back.

The Swiss rider isn't expected to fare as well as Contador, Armstrong, and others strong climbers in the mountains. Cancellara seemed a bit resigned to the prospect he might soon lose the lead. AP

Mavs acquire Marion; Turkoglu now a Raptor

DALLAS—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS acquired four-time All-Star forward Shawn Marion from the Toronto Raptors in a multi-player, four-team trade, they said on Wednesday.

Marion, forward Kris Humphries and center Nathan Jawai will join the Mavericks from the Raptors in exchange for guard Antoine Wright and forward Devean George, plus two-way rash considerations.

To extend moves, the Orlando Magic next joined free agent Hedo Turkoglu to Toronto for cash considerations from the Mavericks and Raptors while Dallas traded Jerry Stackhouse to the Memphis Grizzlies for fellow guard Greg Buckner.

Marion, a 10-year NBA veteran who has averaged 17.2 points and 9.9 rebounds per game in his career, spent only half a season in Toronto after being traded from the Miami Heat.

The versatile 31-year-old averaged 14.2 points, 8.3 rebounds and 2.3 assists in 27 games for the Raptors before being traded to clear salary-cap space for Turkoglu.

Last season, Turkish forward Turkoglu helped lead the Magic to the NBA Finals when they lost to the Los Angeles Lakers in five games.

The 30-year-old was a significant factor for Orlando in post-season play, averaging 15.8 points, 6.3 rebounds and 4.8 assists per game.

"We are very pleased to have landed one of the top free agents available this summer," Raptors president and general manager Bryan Colangelo said in a statement.

"Hedo Turkoglu is an ideal fit basketball wise, and his diverse skill set and size dimension is a tremendous addition to one already talented point team." Reuters

TORONTO manager Bryan Colangelo (left) with Turkoglu

SHAWN Marion east of Toronto after only half a season.

Resurgent Phelps shatters 100-m butterfly mark

INDIANAPOLIS—A FIRED UP MICHael Phelps signalled he was back in top form when he rocketed to a world record in the 100-meter butterfly at the US Nationals on Thursday.

The 24-year-old American ensured any concerns by lacked motivation after he won eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, ending comparisons the Czechoslovak year ago on the 100 butterfly record.

PHELPS swims his way to a new world record.

Phelps' power was on display when he arose out last and pulled away after the turn clocking 50.22 seconds, leaving Tyler McGill a distance secured in 51.06.

Phelps now holds five individual world records—200 and 400 individual medleys, 100 and 200 butterfly and 200 freestyle.

He had previously held the 100 butterfly record when he broke the mark to the semifinals of the 2003 Barcelona world championships.

Coaches however, broke the record with victory to rise final the next day and has lowered it twice since—the last time at the world championships in 2005 when he swam 50.40. Reuters

Korean paces Ochoa, Kerr by 1 shot

BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA—HA Won Choi of South Korea birdied her first three holes, and four others for a 3-under 68 and a one-stroke lead after the first round of the US Women's Open on Thursday.

Top-ranked Lorena Ochoa, 2007 champion Cristie Kerr and qualifier Jean Reynolds reported with 2-under 69s, and Kim Young Hah, also of South Korea, was another stroke back of in a 70.

But the biggest week in women's golf was being overshadowed by reports that US LPGA Tour commissioner Carolyn Bivens could be leaving her post as soon as next week.

Just as Choi was completing her round, Golf Digest and Golfweek Magazine, citing sources, reported on their websites that Bivens' four-year tenure with the tour was coming to an end.

The news came after calls for her resignation by key players.

Overlooked in the fallout of the US LPGA brouhaha were all of Sunday's Choi, the runaway for make of the year in 2008.

Birdies were tough to come by for nearly everyone but the 23 year-old Choi, who has won four times in international events.

Choi made Sunday Valley's narrow fairways seem wide and handled its speedy, undulating greens. She relied on accurate approach shots throughout and reached 5-under by her 12th hole, before backing up just a bit, finishing on the back nine. Choi had consecutive bogeys on the 400-yard, par-4 10th, and 526-yard, par-5 11th before closing with three pars.

US LPGA Championship winner and rookie Anna Nordqvist of Sweden was in a six-way tie for sixth at even par 71 with Cecelie Ring, Eun Hee Ji, amateur Alexis Thompson, Kristy McPherson and Young Kim. AP

CHOI Pranking

Webber nips Button in practice

NUERBURGRING, GERMANY—RED Bull driver Mark Webber set the fastest lap in Friday's opening practice session for the German Grand Prix to edge Formula One leader Jenson Button.

The Australian driver clocked 1 minute, 33.463 seconds around the Nurburgring circuit to lead his Brawn GP rival by just under four-tenths of a second.

Although Red Bull teammate Sebastian Vettel saw his session cut short by a mechanical problem, the Australian team showed it is serious about breaking Brawn GP's domination through the first half of the season.

Brawn, who leads the championship standings with 64 points, has won six of the first eight races with Vettel taking the other one, outlasting the British GP three weeks ago when the young German driver led a Red Bull 1-2 finish. AP

BARE EYE

Micah Trinidad

Micah Trinidad's column will come out tomorrow.

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Valley golfers grab Fed League lead

Standings after 3 rounds (low two shots)
Group 1 Valley 1-1-1-3, Cantabay 1-1-2-3, Davao 1-1-3, Royal Bacolod 1-1-4-3, Holland 1-3-4-3, Mimbitan 1-3-4-3
Group 2 Sta. Rosa 1-0-3-3, Catalunia 1-2-3-3, Riverwood 1-2-4-3, Tanay 1-3-4-3, Manila North-wonds 1-1-4-3, Alphaland 1-3-4-3

VALLEY HILLS, THE FIRST TEED TO POINT a second win after upending defending champion Riviera, 3.5-1.5, at the conclusion of the Men's Federation Golf League matches to earn-ner counters over the weekend.

The tandems of Chino Reyes-coach Chito Lucenio (aggregate) and Boni Bonifilio-Richard Kim (greenskeeper) saved the day for Valley with 1-up victories in their respective matches while Elmer de Leon-Eddy Villa secured the win by taking the hole hall point.

Counting their 3-2 victory of Orchard, Valley seized the top spot in Group 1 at 4 points, just a point ahead of Nepal Northwoods which counted fourships 4-1 at home.

Wack Wack broke into the win column after a pair of losses, posting a cumulative four-ring 4-1 demolition of Orchard in an away game with Gary Uy-Sunny Sun, Ed Marcelo-Buddy Ybiernes, Matthew Moscoso-Ephraim Wong and John Gobing-Hubert Lim garnering the wins.

Riverwood had a 3.5-1.5 result against Catalunia as Vince Lauron-Beng Arguelles, Florencio Ilano-Lucio Oh and Tim Allen-Antonio Lopez came through with big wins.

Peter Kim caught the 18th to salvage a draw for Sierra Hills in an unstable and highlight a 3.5-1.5 manner to an away game at Southwoods.

Teams switch venues this weekend with Valley playing at Riviera, Orchard at Wack Wack, Southwoods at Forbes, Southwoods at Forest Hills, Riverwood Hills at Candelaria and Sta. Elena at Highlands.

Uy, Abelar strike for RP ahead of Junior World

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA — LOU Danielle Uy and Nicole Abelar produced two victories for the Philippines in the San Diego Aquatics Masters on Thursday (Friday) as RP both wrapped up their final preparations for next week's California Junior Championships.

Uy went wire-to-wire to win, taking the girls' 11-12 dime, closing out with a 35.66 1:48 and a three-shot win over Haley Moore.

Abelar led a 1-2 RP finish in the girls' 7-8 after a 9-hole effort of 33 for 68, beating the favored Princess Gilmore-Ilac (33) by three.

Miguel Estrada fell short of the boys' 11-14 title last Tuesday.

Miguel Sayaga, who led the boys 11-12 after Round 1, finished with a 77 16th and settled for fourth place.

Cool Miñoza shows 'em in Pueblo de Oro

CAGAYAN DE ORO—FRANKIE MIÑOZA turned his vacation into a showcase of his fine vintage form yesterday, firing a two-under-par 70 to win the ICTSI Pueblo de Oro Championship by one stroke at the Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club here.

The 49-year-old Miñoza, taking time out from his Japan Golf Tour campaign, posted a 54-hole total of 7-under 209 with his earlier rounds of 71-68.

He parcheted the top purse of P300,000 in this fourth leg of a 13-stage circuit put up by the International Container Terminal Services, Inc.

Trailing 36-hole leader Elmer Salvador by two after the front nine, Miñoza birdied three of the last five holes and won by a shot over Richard Sinbuong, who closed with a 69.

"It's nice to win even when you're hitting 58," said Miñoza, who savored his first victory in home soil since 2007, when he entered his second Philippine Open crown at Pinch Hitch.

Sinbuong rallied with two birdies at the back to finish at 210, a shot ahead of Artemio Murakami, who fired a 71. Salvador picked up P120,000 while Murakami bagged P85,000.

Salvador, known for collapsing in the homestretch, self-destructed again with a 75 capped by a double bogey on the last and fell into a tie with Danny Zamora for fourth at 212.

Zamora, winner of the kickoff leg of the circuit hosted by Mt Carr Golf Management, bounced back with a 68.

Wesley Anton, tied for second with Miñoza at the start of the day, also cracked under pressure, finishing bogey-double bogey for a 74 and a 213 total.

Jess Bernas (77) and Jay Reynes (75) finished tied for seventh at 214 while Casimir Casas (71) and Randy Gordon (70) teamed up with 23 Bs.

Miñoza, who will turn 50 in December, later resumed Pueblo de Oro rudders, ere and locker room personnel in a dinner. He will resume his campaign in the lucrative Japan circuit on July 19.

George Llanera, contributor

FRANKIE MIÑOZA: Pleasant surprise for a junior putting 50.

Asian Junior wrestling: Mighty Iran cops 2 golds

WRESTLING POWERHOUSE IRAN MUSCLED its might early by capturing two gold medals, even as the Philippines crashed out in the Greco-Roman event of the 2009 Asian Junior Championships Thursday at the Philippine Arena in Pinag City.

Arsiami Mohammad raked the 55 kg event, and Ghorbanpoldeh Bahrak topped the 96 kg division to push Iran on top at the start of the 16-nation tournament.

The other winners in the opener of the four-day event were Su Hua of China (66 kg), Yadav Suresh of India (60 kg), Bouchar Kurdbuv of Kazakhstan (74 kg) and Lee Do-yeob of South Korea (96 kg).

The Philippines' Roberson Tabion had the chance to land a medal but lost to Indian Rupender Pania in the repechage of the 96-kg division.

Two other Filipinos—Jared Tabog (55kg) and Rossi Amcing (60kg)—dropped their respective matches to early leaders.

Mohammad delivered Iran's first victory by subduing Med Dharbekov of Kazakhstan, even as India's Manoj and Uzbekistan's Abdurasulov Bekdaw settled for the bronze.

Bahak made it a golden double for Iran after overpowering Muminjon Mullahaev of Uzbekistan.

Kazakhstan's Chamzhek Kabdulov and India's Rupender Pania settled for third place.

China, also an early favorite, stopped Iran's streak at 66-kg but its prominent Mallad Hasan set in the final round.

Nailing a bronze in the same division were Kazakhstan's Nurzat Nigmatulla and Uzbekistan's Komiljon Mamdirov.

Kazakhstan's Bortbiev edged Kyrgyzstan's Sabirat Uulu Temirlan in the 74 kg title match, India's Suresh beat Uzbek Sabirov Muminjon for the gold and South Korea's Lee also stunned Uzbek Kalabek Murabov in the finals of the tournament hosted by the Philippine Sports Commission, Amateur Boxing Association and Iranian Street.

ARDINA: Big victory

Dottie tops low medalist, earns title crack

DOTTIE ARDINA SIPPED LOW MEDALIST Nora Ovadia, 2 and 1, Thursday to crash the finals of the PNGA (Pacific Northwest Golf Association) Women's Amateur Championship at the Newcastle Golf Club in Molalla, Oregon.

The 15-year-old Ardina birdied the par-3 16th, then matched Ovadia's par on the next hole to secure the victory and her second entry in a final in the last three events.

She earlier subdued ICTSI teammate Debbie Ikeda over 19 holes in a thrilling duel and then stayed focused against Ovadia, who turned back Ian Hu-yan, 3 and 1, in the other quarterfinal pairing.

Ardina, the top ICTSI golf scholar who recently ruled the national amateur championship back home, grabbed the lead when Ovadia bogeyed the par-3 second hole.

Although the ace Filipina dominator never led by as many two holes, Ardina kept Ovadia at bay with clutch pars on Nos. 9 and 11, both which the Californian set bogeyed.

An Ardina double bogey on No. 13 enabled Ovadia to draw within 1 hole but the Filipina delivered the killer blow with a six-foot birdie on the 16th.

A routine par on the 17th clinched the rough win for Ardina, who will try to round the stigma of her loss to Adriaenne Taylor Kelly in the IWSGA (Women's Western Golf Association) Championship in Ohio last June 21.

Cyra Rodriguez, who topped boys Torpedo for the crown last year, bowed to Kendra Cirelli, 5 and 4, in the quarterfinals. Cirelle then stunned Daniela Darevski, 7 and 5, to set up a duel with Ikeda.

No less than a title for Lee, Warriors

By Cedrell P. Tipan

SABI AS IT IS TO IMAGINE HOW Paul Lee was once a gun-shy rookie who refused to get his teammates more touched rather than take the big shots.

That's not going to be the case this season when the Warriors go to discard their tag as underachievers.

A sensational rookie season in the PBL, where he displayed his deft outside shooting and driven, tenacious playing mentality.

Lee epitomizes the mental toughness that coach Lawrence Chongson said his team needs to win a record 10th cage crown.

"If we don't win the championship, I'll be very disappointed," said coach Lawrence Chongson whose confidence devolves behind his stress as the only greenhorn in the group of vouchers this year.

Lee will team up with Rudy Lingganay in the backcourt, while veterans Elmer Espinas and Bel Dagar form one of the league's most experienced frontcourts.

For the first time, the Warriors joined the Joe Abramson import basketball Camp in California, where the Alamo Eagles have always trained the past few years.

The core of the UE squad saw action in the Cobra Energy Warriors in the PBL after their campaign in the Ming Tim Cup tournament in Taipei, where they placed second last February.

But the Warriors' biggest achievement came in April when they ruled the Lee Wah Basketball Showcase, where coach-dist. Ireneo del Mundo was named MVP.

Cheer, don't jeer

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Sev Sarmenta

AS THE LAST DYING EMBERS OF THE weekend's festivities fizzle out, it's time to reflect on the previous days' celebrations to find victors and get lessons or the losers.

UAAP schools are the biggest universities in the country with large student bodies, thus from academic wits are classified, students from different generations come to savor the thrills of college sports, trashing like cheering for the old alma mammy to schmaltz over youth, spirit and energy.

And yes with all the hoopla, certain modes of behavior just have to be observed, lending a token doesn't simply allow you to do what you want to do. Enjoyment has to be within reasonable bounds so that everybody can enjoy the games.

Here are a couple worth considering:

• Cheer don't jeer—There are enough college cheers and chants to keep you busy. Cheer for your team and don't get paranoid with the players or rival teams.

Goldstein got irritated over players who are outspoken or suspense smoopy or rather, that man is basketball and you can't expect a cager to be a charm magnet. So as the last gun to be known, wearing about playing the game, about how you watch it playing.

• The refs aren't out to get you.—Yes the more person to sit next to is a college game because of the work I do, I give the referees the benefit of the doubt and I judge calls based on the rules and the refs' methodes.

Of course, fellow alumni and classmates don't always think this way, so I'd rather watch the games on the table at home. So refer here, no refereemates asking me to do something about the call, like I can do something about it.

• Don't give outspoken displeasure over calls you believe to be wrong against your side. Do so without bringing in the refs' relatives who have nothing to do with the disputed call.

• Throw no bids.—For the older generation, think about this before you unleash all that bottled up school spirit or would a dirty sign from your partner in the stands not be brought to the game and the others around you. They're not exactly cursing you at your best and it's hard to explain some expletives.

• Don't pick up a fight.—Let's limit the fights to verbal assaults, namecalling, schoolyard positioning, trading an adversary you see during the court same things you've doing just look road.

Why go to a game to look for pregame fights? There mismatch bouts. Injury your reserve. Blame future with schoolmates.

• Have fun.—College ball is all about fun. Aside from cheering favorite/desirable words together or yelling some ol-sayings/sentences you remember, the experience of sitting in the gallery with friends is the stuff college memories are made of.

Many moments that don't deserve only boos but also a joy to see in the arena. When your favorite basketball [game] has tickets, there are possibilities of games to see games for more college hoopdig.

Dip and enjoy the college athletic season while keeping your head together. You'll be glad you did.

Maroons tougher this time

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES coach Aboy Castro has committed wisdom of the team's point.

After doubling up their opponents in the last year following a winless campaign season, the Maroons are out to put up a better fight with the acquisition of ace rookie Mark Borromeo and Gilbert Reyes and the return of Martin Reyes, Wendy Go, Mark Lopez and Magi Sison.

"We want to be in the same ballpark," said Castro, when asked about seeing the Maroons for the second straight season. "We mostly had double digit losses last year, so we want to be in closer games."

Ateneo, the former Adamson Baby Falcons forward who bagged the juniors' MVP last year, shores up the Maroons frontline together with new recruit Carlo Cuenco.

Also adding depth to the blueroots backcourt are Hilton Reyes, a standout point guard from La Salle Green Hills, Mariah Joel Gingerich from Ateneo Academy and San Sebastian alum Padilla.

"They give a lot in terms of height and speed," said Castro.

And with this arsenal's fourth spot shaping up to be a wide-open race, the Maroons aim to pull off some upsets. Jeannine B. Reyes

HARDING' CAGE PARTNER Officials of Eastern Communications and the University of the Philippines basketball squad join hands in seal Eastern's sponsorship of the Maroons' stint in the 72nd season's UAAP cage wars. From left, UP coach Aboy Castro, Eastern's Rene Castillo, UP board member Ben Mendoza, Bobi Lacson of Eastern, Christine Bonifacio of UP Pilar Koshi-Lucio of Eastern, Chiong Rivera of UP Edwin Domingo of Eastern, Jay Castro of UP and Raul Papungayan and Rodolfo Pardoy rada of Eastern.

Winning...

From page A26

the team. We are more mature and more prepared for battle. We may be the favorites but we have to show that on the court."

The Maroons have eight rookies, including Cesar Ruiz, a product of Ateneo Academy, and they will look to newly installed skipper Cuenco and 6-foot-6 Ramos for leadership as they look to ensure defending champion Ateneo.

"They showed big improvement," said Coquia of the sectional pool players. "I'm hoping their experience with the national team will make them better team leaders in UE."

Coquia is also looking for more in rebounding.

"It's history time," he said. "This is already the third year of our rebuilding program."

Archers' crack rookie class comes off wraps

A COMBINED AVERAGE OF 30.2 points, 14.2 rebounds, 5.3 assists, 2.2 steals and 1.2 blocks.

Those are the statistics the La Salle Green Archers are going to unite with the departure of veterans guard JC Cortez and athletic big man Ben Mbanbanbe from the UAAP men's basketball competition this season.

"We're in the process of rebuilding," admitted La Salle coach Franz Pumaren. "If you lose your best scorer and you lose your best defensive player and rebounder, it's going to be hard."

Still, Cortez going up for his playing years and Mbanbanbe foregoing his final year of eligibility to join the PBA draft, the Archers are in for a tougher road back to the Finals, a season after sweeping a season-ending finish against Ateneo (3rd Season).

"We still have talented returnees," said Pumaren. "But there's the luxury of college basketball. Players come and go and coaches just have to maximize the talent that they have."

Expected to take charge are seasoned James Mangahas and Persito Barasa.

By season's end, the best freshmen class this season, however, the Archers expect to rise to re-install the Final Four.

"Hopefully the younger guys and the rookies will be able to adjust right away to the college play," said Pumaren.

Aerin Bitagan, the 6-foot-3 center who helped San Sebastian (Bmd) four straight NCAA juniors titles, leads the rookie cast that includes four national youth team players.

"He will bring to size, at least we have an option inside the paint," said Pumaren of Bitagan, last year's NCAA juniors Finals MVP. "Aerin is a powerful forward type. I think he can help us a lot."

Jeremiah M. Pape

Ababou new Tigers main man

By Cedell P. Tapas

FOR A CHANGE, UNIVERSITY OF SANTO Tomas' offense will not revolve inside the paint this season.

Back to life without bumper Jerry Cruz, the MVP two years ago, who spearheaded the Tigers' last probable title run in 2006.

But the Tigers remain in Ateneo, thanks in large part to versatile Dylan Ababou, tipped as one of the finest amateur outsiders today.

"Dylan will be the cornerstone of the team," coach Pido Jarencio said of Ababou, who played for the national development pool in the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup in the summer.

"We will be more of a running team this year. We played a more deliberate style the past two years because of Jerry."

Jarencio infused eight rookies into the line-up with former Xavier School star Jess Teng and former Letran Squire Darrell Comia as the most notable prospects.

"He's really a big body for us," Jarencio said of the 6-foot-1 Teng, whose father, Alvin, was a PBA star in the 1980s. "He's a physical player and I think that's what our team needs."

Though the Tigers boast one of the tallest rookie-cast combinations in the league in 6-foot-4 Dustin Atkins and the 6-3 Ababou, they lack of ceiling in the frontline seems to be a concern for Jarencio, who is expected to make the lanky 6-5 Comia his starting center.

But Jarencio said his rookie's deficiencies have given the Tigers more reasons to embrace his motto: "I Fi" formula—"pride, pure, pulso-hon (heart, fighting spirit)."

Eagles focused on title repeat

By Jeronico W. Pape

A CHAMPIONSHIP HANGOVER IS THE least of Ateneo's worries.

With a lineup still loaded in talent-to-boot and a match pursuit of the coach's home, the Blue Eagles remain formidable as they bid for a second straight UAAP championship.

"We have the comfort of the team last year," said Ateneo coach Norman Black. "The main thing for us is just to maintain our focus and concentration and not relax in the past."

The confidence stems from the return of reigning MVP Kelvin Ad-Hocanna, top defensive player Nonoy Baclao and last season's Rookie of the Year Ryan Buenafe.

Mike Ganuelas-Rico Salmond, Jai Norris and sharpshooter Rich Crang are also returning for the Eagles, one of the few teams spared from the mass departure of veterans players this season.

And by the look of it, the Eagles just might replicate the dominance and chemistry that helped them win all but one elimination game both on sweeping flows dead La Salle in the best-of-three Finals last year.

There's hardly a leadership void even with the graduation of Chris Tiu as Black points to the improved skills and maturity of his match.

"Hopefully we can make up for the difference Tiu and Yan Escanlar made last year," said Black, who can also count on former Eagles Ateneo Tenorio and Frank Golla, a reclaimed youth team members and Brazilian-born International transferee Christian De Chavez.

"I've always said that the years that can improve over the course of the league is the team that will probably win the championship," said Black, save on his fifth year with the Eagles.

ATTACK! Is tipped to reach the front again—but perhaps not against La Salle.

Falcons ready for Final 4 again

THE CONFIDENT ADAMSON swagger, running for the better part of last season, is back.

And coach Leo Austria said the Falcons will have all they do Bulldog success if they fail to forget into the Final Four for the first time since 2000 this season.

"This is a good opportunity for us to make it to the Final Four situation because many teams lost their top players," said Austria.

The return of veterans point guard and former juniors' MVP Leo Canaday has Austria excited.

Canaday, sidelined by an elbow injury last season, returns to the roster initially as backup for point guard Jerick Cabada.

Austria said he expects his proved problems from Jiro Colina and Michael Galimao, who both saw action in the PBL in the Hidoon try to fill the gaps left by Neil Cunanan and Mare Agustin.

"It's basically the same lineup as last season," said Austria, who noted that rookies Ross Cabrera and Jerson Cruzeta are taller than Cunanan and Agustin. *C. P. Tapas*

Bulldogs rebuilding underway

WITH THE DEPARTURE OF ITS TOP FOUR SCORers, Southeast University sets its course on the experience and energy of new talent this season.

"We lost the whole core, so that is a brand new team, a new breed," said coach Manny Dandan of the Bulldogs, who lost to graduated seniors Jun Ed-win Aseo and veterans Rommel Aguilar, Jonathan Jalandoni and Jenny Garcia.

Team captain Mervin Jadoonan, guard Michael Lee and big man Jewel Ventenada hope to fill in and lift the Bulldogs from a forth-seeding position last year.

Also hoping to add spunk to the Bulldogs' bid are seven rookies led by former national youth team member Joseph Sorio, Dennis Garcia brought the tenacious and fearless San Pedro player Ayee Gingle.

"No one even thinks we add like to step up," said Jenchos. "The problem is how we answer to this."

Dandan said the Bulldogs' rebuilding period is just starting after the friendly-of coach surprises Aseo try brought the cooperate shoes of SU. *Jeremiah M. Pape*

SPORTS

UAAP fires off; La Salle duels UE

League opens 72nd season with new aces, fresh faces

By Jasmine N. Payo

A NEW BATCH OF IMPROVED TALENTS AND FRESH FACES TAKES OVER AS the 72nd UAAP men's basketball competition unfolds today at the Araneta Coliseum.

With Ateneo folding off to back-to-back championship bid tomorrow, the spotlight falls on three rival and last year's runner-up La Salle when it takes on tournament darkhorse University of the East at 4 p.m.

"It's a different team compared to the past seasons," said coach Franz Pumaren of his Green Archers, six of whom are greenhorns out to help fill the void left by the departure of JR Cruz and Rico Maierhofer.

"Every year, you just have to adapt and work with the materials given to you," said Pumaren, who's on his 12th season with the Archers.

"Hopefully we'll be competitive each game. How will the rookies fare? I can only answer that after the UAAP season. So they have to prove themselves."

University of Santo Tomas, the 2006 champion which missed out on a Final Four slot last year, tackles Adamson University at 2 p.m.

A glitzy opening ceremony presented by Intel The Business University at 1 p.m. fires off the action to the country's most popular varsity league.

The Archers hope to stay afloat with senior swingmen James Mangahas and Benjie Bacas and six blue-chip rookies led by Arvie Bringas.

While the Archers are banking on youth and energy, the Warriors boast an experienced cast bannered by Paul Lee, Pat Llagas and Elmer Espiritu.

"We're more primed and matured," said new UE coach Lawrence Chongson. "Our core players had a good stint in the PBL. We hope they'll carry that confidence to the UAAP."

Adding color to the matchup will be Dindo Pumaren, who will serve as assistant to his older brother Franz after serving the Warriors as five-straight semifinal stints and a runner-up finish in 2007.

The Tigers, meanwhile, begin the campaign minus stalwart Jerry Cruz. But the versatile Dylan Alaulira hopes to become the spiritual leader of a team heavy with eight freshmen.

"We'll be ready," said UST coach Pido Jarencio. "I just hope [the younger players] will remember their game plans."

"If we find a good flow in our offense and our defense doesn't break down, we'll be decent against Adamson."

The Falcons, who tabbed among this year's darkhorses, are also banking on the return of Leo Gonzaga and the improved game of Michael Galimore, Jewish Calunsag and Ian Celino.

"We know Pido; ever since he started coaching he's full of surprises," said Adamson mentor Leo Austria. "But, we'll try our best to get the team ready for any situations."

The Eagles, still formidable despite the graduation of the do-it-all Chris Tiu, got going at 4 p.m. tomorrow against the PEC Initiatees, the tournament favorites handicapped by three members of the national development pool.

National University and University of the Philippines collide earlier at 2 p.m.

LEE Unos of East

PANGANIBAN La Salle

AL-HUSSAINI Ateneo

ABABOU Santo Tomas

CANUDAY Adamson

BARROCA Spiritual leader

Winning time for Far Eastern U Tamaraws

By Cedrik P. Tayao

IT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY FAR Eastern U coach Glenn Capacio moved ace Mark Barroca from the point to shooting guard this season as the Tamaraws vie for the championship in the 72nd UAAP season.

Showing remarkable improvement, Barroca has morphed into a scoring machine, significantly extending his perimeter game while sharpening his skills in creating off the dribble.

The other reason: The potential drawn by rookie playmaker Ryan Monteclaro.

Capacio has anointed Garcia as his starting point guard, forming an explosive combination with Barroca, who is expected to score more rather than become a feeder. Which has been his primary role in his first two years with the Tamaraws.

"He's good and he's very experienced in a rookie," Capacio said of the Siam Institute of Taiwan, who spent his first two years with the Tamaraws' Rajstel.

The Zamboanga native, who had a stint with the JIP Youth team and was named Most Valuable Player of the PESB Flying V Pre-season MVP Cup ruled by the Tamaraws, adds depth to an already formidable FEU roster, which boasts of three members of the national developmental pool—Barroca, JR Cawaling and Aldrech Ramos.

"We have a balanced team," said Capacio. "I'm happy with the composition of

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IN THIS ISSUE
■ Gov't to set up P2-B renewable energy fund /B3
■ Recession drives BPOs to efficiency /B4

Editor Raul D. Maralit • Assistant Editor Carole S. Nariman

BUSINESS

SPEED UP YOUR PC

BSP reports 154% surge in investments

RP wins investors' trust even with crisis in full swing

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas yesterday reported a surge in foreign direct investments in April, saying that, even with an economic crisis in full swing, the country somehow managed to regain the confidence of foreign investors.

According to the BSP, net inflows of FDIs amounted to $681 million in April, up 154 percent from only $226 million in the same month last year.

Gross FDI inflows, during the month, totaled, meanwhile, to $839 million while gross outflows reached only $158 million.

One of the biggest sources of FDI inflows in April was the equity infusion of Japanese firm Kirin Holdings Corp. into beverage giant San Miguel Brewery. Kirin invested in San Miguel went up to 48.2 percent after it acquired an additional 5.09 percent stake in the company for P9.09 billion ($ 187.9 million).

In February, Kirin initially bought a 12.2 percent of San Miguel for P56.9 billion ($1.2 billion).

The country's performance in attracting FDIs in April bought total net inflows in the first four months of the year to $681 million, up 29 percent from $562 million in the same period a year ago.

The reduced fall in FDI inflows, given the difficult global economic conditions, reflected foreign investors' confidence in the country's macroeconomic fundamentals," the central bank said in a statement.

The BSP said that, apart from manufacturing, other sectors that benefited from FDIs in end-April were real estate, construction, financial intermediation, and trade and commerce.

Following this collapse of Lehman Brothers and other financial institutions in the United States and Europe, emerging economies like the Philippines saw a decline in investments as investors opted to

SEE REPORTS B2

RP exports continued to dip in May

By Bernard W. Dominguez

EXPORTS CONTINUED TO DECLINE IN May, with earnings sliding by 27 percent to $3.007 billion from $4.225 billion in the same month last year.

Merchandise exports registered the eighth straight month of decline in May although the rate of the month was better than the -30.5 percent year-on-year contraction seen in April.

The National Statistics Office said in its latest report on exports that the value increased on a month-on-month basis by 18.1 percent from the $2.803 billion seen in April.

In the first five months of 2009, cumulative earnings declined by 34.5 percent to $13.014 billion from $21.299 billion in the same period a year ago.

In May alone, electronic products—which accounted for 58.7 percent of total embossed cargos—fell by 26.9 percent year-on-year to $1.811 billion, mainly due to the decrease in shipments of semiconductors and devices.

But compared to April receipts, electronics improved by 7.6 percent from $1.684 billion.

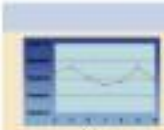
Economic Planning Secretary Ralph G. Recto said the improvement in shipments of electronic products benefited from the 5.4 percent increase in global sales for the period April to May.

Recto said that during those months, sales of semiconductors grew by 2.9 percent in the Americas, 0.4 percent in Europe, 7.2 percent in Japan, and 8.7 percent in Asia Pacific.

He added that neighboring markets like Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Thailand also posted month-on-month improvements in their respective exports in May.

However, more advanced neighbors like

SEE EXPORTS B2



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Citi upbeat on equity market

US bank says pace of global recovery may be subdued

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMERICAN BANKING GIANT CITIGROUP is upbeat on the equity markets, given indications of a continued recovery in global corporate profits and economic activity encouraging hot-pain-hunters to take advantage of market dips to accumulate stocks.

In a statement on its recent research, the bank said global equities would likely remain strong through the end of this year and "Most emerging markets, small capitalization stocks and growth stocks in the US could perform well."

But Citi also warned that the pace of global recovery would likely be subdued and more likely to take the form of a "U" shape rather than V-shaped or Nagle-financial conditions. Further balance sheet restructuring and the widespread plunge in activity and credit availability could remain a drag on global trade.

As opposed to a V-shaped or fast rebound after a brief slump, a U-shaped recovery means the economy will remain sluggish for quite a bit longer, or about 12 to 18 months.

"Real vehicle signs point to further strength in global stock prices, our sentiment gauges would be modest and equity markets may also experience notable pullbacks on the way up," Citi said in a statement.

"Any weakness over the coming months, however, would be viewed as buying opportunities, especially for investors with a medium- or long-term perspective," it said.

For high net worth clients, Citi's wealth management strategists provide the following key investment themes for the second half of this year:

- A long-term increase in government spending on infrastructure in both energy and developed markets remains critical to the sustained recovery of the global economy.
- There will likely be more upside for investment-grade corporate bonds although towards later maturities and outperformed US treasuries near the start of the year.
- Taiwan's equity market may offer good opportunities for those seeking overseas investments.
- It may be a good time to look at the technology sectors, which typically leads broader markets during an economic recovery.

Peso seen to remain stable until 2010

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas expects the peso to remain relatively stable until next year, supported by modest growth in foreign exchange inflows.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said there were no substantial threats to the stability of the peso, adding that the exchange rate would likely move to between 46 and 49 to the US dollar—the official assumption used by the Development Budget Coordination Committee in setting the government's fiscal program for 2009 to 2010.

"The exchange rate is expected to be stable since the country's balance of payments (BOP) is also seen to post surpluses this year and the next," Guinigundo said.

Over the past weeks, the peso remained in the 46-to-a-dollar level.

The BSP expects the BOP to post a $700-million surplus this year. It has yet to make an estimate for next year, but monetary officials said a surplus was also likely.

BOP, a record of the country's economic transactions with the rest of the world, is the difference between the inflows and outflows of foreign exchange.

Inflows include earnings from exports, remittances, foreign direct and portfolio investments, and foreign currency-denominated borrowings. Outflows represent payments for imports and external debts, as well as investments offshore.

A surplus in the BOP increases the gross international reserves (GIR), the country's total foreign currency holdings.

Singapore bank expects no contraction in May

By Reuters/W. Domingo

A CONTRACTION OF THE DOmestic economy in the second quarter is unlikely, and this may compel the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to stop easing its key policy rates, according to UBS Bank.

"Another (quarter-on-quarter) contraction is not our main scenario, and in fact said, we are not pencilling in any more rate cuts," UBS said in its latest report on the Philippines.

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reported last May that the gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 1.8 percent in the first quarter from the year compared to the fourth quarter in 2008.

GDP refers to the total value of good and services produced and paid for within an economy to distinguish it from gross income.

The NSCB had warned that another quarter-on-quarter decline would bring the country into a recession.

"If the close upturn in household credit since March is any indication, then the economy may have avoided another cross-centerline-led decline in the second quarter," said the bank based in Singapore.

On Thursday, the central bank announced a reduction of 25 basis points on its overnight borrowing and lending rates.

The BSP now forecasts and lends at historic lows of 6 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

BDO among Asia's most admired firms

BANCO DE ORO UNIBANK INC. has been recognized as one of Asia's 200 Most Admired Companies in a poll conducted by Wall Street Journal, one of the largest daily newspapers in the world.

The Wall Street Journal Asia 200 is an annual ranking of Asia's leading companies, as determined by 2,000 executives and professionals across the Asia-Pacific.

The same poll also ranked BDO as among the Philippines' Top 10 Most Admired Firms, as it earned the Top Five spot in terms of financial reputation and innovation.

The annual poll, which is now in its 14th year, was started by the Far Eastern Economic Review until it changed hands four years ago. This is the third time the survey was published by the Wall Street Journal Asia.

BSP reports 1¼% ... From page B1

way on its inhibition.

Most monetary officials said foreign investors were closely regulating their appetite, believing that the worst of the economic turmoil was over and economies were on their way to gradual recovery.

The Philippines and other emerging economies were not insulated from the global crisis. Many of them took to industrialized nations as markets for their exports. In the case of the Philippines, the United States and Europe are two of its biggest export markets, accounting for 17 and 14 percent of total export earnings.

Developments in the global economy also affected remittances of Filipinos working abroad. Remittances sent to by workers serve as a major driver of household consumption which, in turn, boosts the domestic economy.

Layoffs and wage cuts offshore are partly to blame for the slowdown in the growth of remittances. As a result, consumption eased in the first quarter to an annual growth rate of only 0.6 percent from 5.1 percent in the same quarter a year ago.

Weak consumption and sluggish investments were cited as major reasons for the deceleration of the economy, which grew by only 0.4 percent in the first quarter—the slowest in 10 years.

The year, the government expects the economy to grow between 0 to 1 percent this year, slower than the 3.5 percent recorded last year.

Shares ... From page B1

The composite index added 13.37 points to 2,487.22 while the all-shares index rose 9.48 points to 1,597.09.

A total of 1.83 billion shares worth P2.23 billion ($46.36 million) changed hands with 54 issues up, 45 down and 56 unchanged.

"We're still waiting for guidance from the United States," Nestor Aguila, of DA Market Securities, told Dow Jones Newswire. "Most investors are still hesitant to buy. This (third quarter) is usually a period of consolidation with a downward bias. What we're seeing is prudent accumulation."

Philippine Long Distance Telephone rose 0.66 percent to P2,348, while Jollibee Foods added 2.38 percent to P49. Manila Electric Co. gained 1.79 percent to P179. AFP

RP exports ...

From page B1

Japan, China, South Korea and Singapore continued to experience downtrend in exports.

Receipts from the Philippines' second top export—which were still mostly of apparel and clothing accessories, representing 7.6 percent of total shipments—slid by 26.8 percent year-on-year to $113.21 million.

Cathodes and sections of cathodes made of refined copper, which were third with 2.8 percent of total cargo, shrank by 44.7 percent to $45.83 million.

The fourth top export with a share of 2.6 percent, woodcrafts and furniture, slid by 16.4 percent to $70.84 million.

Electrical wiring for motors for motor vehicles came in fifth at 1.9 percent of the total. Its earnings plunged by 16 percent to $37.1.4 million.

Metallic tanned goods represented 10.9 percent of receipts and went down in appropriate value by 24.8 percent to $2.630 billion in May.

Last month's decline, the share biggest narrow for Philippine goods all showed during orders for shipments.

Philippine Stock Exchange

Disclosures

DLL HOLDINGS INC. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 30, 2009, at 9 a.m. at the Crowne Park Hotel in Manila. Shareholders of record as of Aug. 31, 2009 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank declared a cash dividend of P0.15 per share for the fourth quarter of 2009 payable to all common stockholders as of July 23, 2009, as approved by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Dividend checks will be available on Aug. 7, 2009.

* * *

MANCHESTER International Holdings Limited Corp. has announced the resignation of Michael Lee-Chin as director.

* * *

FIRST Philippine Holdings Corp. declared cash dividends on the 16.1 billion Series B Preferred Shares. Dividends are payable to shareholders as of July 24, 2009, payable on July 31, 2009. The preferred cash dividend per share is P4.36.

* * *

MANILA Water Co. Inc. has elected Ludin Bell to the board to replace and serve the remainder of the term of Kevin Brading. Bell is now a member of the executive committee and nomination committee.

* * *

DENNIS Holdings Corp. has accepted the resignation of Vicente Dionisio as independent director for health reasons, and elected Conor Vicente to take his place.

Compiled by Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research

Currencies

July 10, 2009		Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Country	Unit			
United States	Dollar	47.1364	1.000000	47.1364
Japan	Yen	0.501251	0.010636	0.01
United Kingdom	Pound	77.5000	1.644200	77.50
Hong Kong	Dollar	6.078	0.128950	6.08
Switzerland	Franc	43.7500	0.928000	43.7500
Canada	Dollar	43.7500	0.928000	43.7500
Singapore	Dollar	33.0000	0.700000	33.0000
Australia	Dollar	39.2500	0.832700	39.2500
Bahrain	Dinar	125.0000	2.651600	125.0000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	12.5000	0.265200	12.5000
Kuwait	Dollar	164.0000	3.479200	164.0000
Malaysia	Ringgit	13.0000	0.275800	13.0000
Austria	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Italy	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Belgium	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Spain	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Germany	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
France	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Netherlands	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Finland	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Ireland	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Portugal	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Greece	Euro	65.0000	1.379200	65.0000
Sweden	Krona	6.0000	0.127300	6.0000
Denmark	Krone	8.7500	0.185600	8.7500
Norway	Krone	7.5000	0.159100	7.5000
China	Yuan	6.9000	0.146400	6.9000
Thailand	Baht	1.3000	0.027600	1.3000
India	Rupee	0.9000	0.019100	0.9000
Korea	Won	0.0350	0.000700	0.0350
New Zealand	Dollar	32.0000	0.679000	32.0000
Sweden	Krona	6.0000	0.127300	6.0000
Taiwan	NT Dollar	1.4000	0.029700	1.4000

Gov't to set up ₱2-B renewable energy fund

Money to come largely from state-controlled firms

By Amy R. Remo

THE ADMINISTRATION of Energy will put up a P2-billion Renewable Energy Trust Fund to help develop renewable energy sources, as well as promote the use of renewable energy in the country.

In a conference hosted by Chevron Geothermal Philippines here, Energy Assistant Secretary Mario Marasigan said the trust fund will help develop renewable energy sources, "if we are serious" in promoting the use of renewable energy.

In particular, Marasigan said 1.5 percent of the annual remittances of state-controlled firms Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office would go to the trust fund.

A portion of the government's earnings from Philippine National Oil Development Co. (PNOC), royalties of the Department of Energy (DOE) from various service contracts, as well as payments for penalties and violations of the Clean Air Act will also go to the trust fund, he said.

The DOE, he said, would be tasked to administer the fund, or it could engage the services of a fund manager to better oversee fund disbursement.

The creation of a Renewable Energy Trust Fund is provided in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) governing the Renewable Energy Act 2008.

The IRR, which was signed in May is expected to help generate some $0.5 billion investments in the renewable energy sector over the next 10 years.

The investments are expected to result in an additional capacity of 4,500 megawatts from renewable energy sources such as biomass, geothermal, hydro, ocean, wind and solar.

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes earlier said the country's renewable energy generation potential could reach as much as 200,000 megawatts (MW).

Marasigan said the DOE had created the Renewable Energy Management Bureau, which would have four divisions to cater to specific energy resources. These are geothermal, biomass and biofuels; hydro and ocean, and solar and wind.

Also mandated under the IRR is the establishment of the National Renewable Energy Board (NREB), which serves as a recommending body on renewable energy policies and action plans for the DOE's implementation.

BUT HOW is the thing: The Philippines actually got a good deal from Vietnam at that time. I am not sure just exactly where that $500-per-ton figure came from, but I know that the world price of rice never went down below $600 per ton last year.

The Rice Committee of the Board of Trade of Thailand is the industry reference on world rice prices. Last December, it pegged the FOB (freight on board) price at between $616 and $624 per ton.

Rice and shine

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

Thus excluded the shipping costs and other expenses. In comparison, the $560-per-ton price quotes by the Philippines from Vietnam, then, what I gathered, already included freight costs, insurance, port charges and, doubtless, export fees and what have you.

Besides, the shipments were payable in eight months. If somebody else could give us a better deal than that, he should have joined the bidding for the Philippine order. Surely, he would have gotten the deal.

That we, the taxpayers were through the scrutiny of the Private Sector Procurement Transparency Group, or the PSPTG, headed by lawyer Patricio Mercado, representing the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference of the Philippines (BBCP).

I don't know if you could actually feel around with that group.

IF THERE is any good thing that our beloved politicians can do for a change, they can, for instance, put that group on the back for a change.

Last February, only a few months after the deal, world rice prices were up to another planet at more than $900 per ton, everything included.

It seems the Department of Agriculture, which spearheaded the deal with Vietnam, already sees the upturn.

The DA actually asked eight countries for quotes—the United States, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, Pakistan, Thailand, China and Vietnam.

Only Vietnam and Thailand responded. Thailand's offers were all above $600 per ton.

If the DA did not take a cue from Thailand's pricing, and it threw the offer much lower than Vietnam's, I hope some people who would have gotten a cut-rate everybody in department.

* * *

NOW, THIS country actually produces as lot of rice, covering roughly 90 percent of the entire consumption of more than 90 million people.

We have to tap the remaining 10 percent from abroad. It is critical supply, nevertheless, because its price always dictates the domestic prices of our staple food. The rice traders take a cue from the price of imported rice.

Here are the facts. On the average, rice fetched in P31 to P34 per kilo in the markets here last month, against P36 to P38 in June last year.

What explains the drop? Well, I think we had a lot of rice last month. If only for that, our show-off politicos should shut up already, thank you!

* * *

IN REACTION to our tribb (June 13) on the effort of OFW president Roy David to bring home stranded OFWs in the Middle East, OWWA Administrator Carmelita S. Dimzon wrote:

"Your column highlighted the role of the business sector in the recent repatriation of 158 distressed overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). It applauded Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), San Miguel Corp. (SMC) and think of the Philippine Islands (BPI) for their participation in the 'rescue mission.' Rightly so, for they helped bring home the disturbed workers who, unfortunately, had left the country to seek work overseas without registering with POEA and OWWA.

"The whole mission was undertaken by OWWA in close coordination with the three sponsors, the Philippine mission, particularly the Philippine Overseas Labor Officer, as the concerned agency. The personnel of OWWA took charge of only the 'rest' when repatriation was supposed to be its job.

"We would like to inform you that OWWA is authorized by law to subsidize the repatriation costs of its member-workers only. Given this legal restriction, we could only pay for the repatriation details of the OWWA members who were in the bunches of OFWs who came home on that day.

"However, upon arrival at the airport, every worker, whether an OWWA member or not, was provided by OWWA the services mainly heard and lodging at OWWA, medical services, counseling, etc., to those who needed such services. This is what OWWA does every time we have repatriation cases."

Holcim expects higher Q2 profit

By Doris C. Dorisan

HOLCIM (PHILIPPINES) INC. cement maker Holcim Philippines is expecting better second-quarter business performance compared to 9-year up-carry due to higher government infrastructure spending.

"The trend of the first quarter continues. The market conditions are the same," Holcim Philippines president Francis Feliciano said in a briefing.

Domestic demand for cement remained resilient, particularly driven by the residential property segment. He said the company also felt the positive impact of the government's fiscal pump-priming measures in the country's economy.

Instead of the Christmas months, the Easter month in construction activities as holidays take advantage of the dry season.

Feliciano said the effects of the first semester would likely be better than a year ago as Holcim benefited from the positive impact of the government's fiscal pump-priming measures in the country's economy.

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"

BUSINESS

Goodbye to 'gutom'

COMMENTARY

By Bracken H. Ordoñez

THEY SAY THAT IN BOLIBOL, those with a long PC (pin) to ex-cooperate have the best chance of achieving victory.

In the challenging area of development, it is those with a different kind of DC (namely, paradigm) that succeed.

Many have passion, but without competence (the ability to do), the passion is usually lost.

I believe it is General Gallaga's (GE) distinctive advantage of competence that has accounted for much of its phenomenal success.

Food for the hungry

Last July 6, GE launched its food sufficiency program, Bayan Ambon (BA), with the battle cry "Goodbye Gutom." General Gallaga, which means "to give you," is a holistic community program that aims to eradicate poverty in the Philippines.

GE views that it employs a simple strategy of "providing food for the families, houses for the homeless and food for the hungry."

GE&A addresses the third component. This is an enormous task where competence must be added to passion for success to be sure.

There were competent individuals who spearheading this drive. GE&A champion John Cunningham, executive director Mike Clarin-Sito, and agriculture director Mario Pojas.

Cunningham was working abroad for Unilever after very successful stints in Thailand, the Netherlands and India. He left a very lucrative job to bring his business development competence to GE&A with a vision, and modest salary and framework. Sincerity is good, but results are better.

Upon his return, he followed Unilever, President Fidel Ramos' mot to tell us: "Don't say you will do it; say you did it."

Committed with this, two months before last Wednesday's 66-GE&A launch, Cunningham and his team planted selected vegetables in 115 GE&A 10-square meter "farms" to maximize profit-efficiency.

Only when they found their farms successful with an impressive yield of 24 metric tons did they proceed to launch the 66BA program.

Mock credit should go to the university professors and the Department of Agriculture technicians for providing the right technologies for this project.

Eating an elephant

Cunningham told me his aim, as "tell an elephant" strategy: "To successfully eat an elephant, you must do three things: (1) the correction of the constraints of the problem; (2) cut the elephant into manageable pieces; and (3) eat every day."

One country's hunger problem is enormous.

According to the first quarter 2009 Social Weather Station survey, an estimated 3 million households (or approximately 15 million people) are experiencing hunger.

The problem must therefore be cut into manageable parts.

The GE&A focus is initially on the metropolitan, but individuals in clusters of 50, with each individual taking care of a 10-square meter vegetable plot.

The can then grow to major to small-scale commercial farming, where part of the produce is sold, then on to integrated farming, where other products maybe grown such as medicinal plants, livestock, and fruit trees, and on to the establishment of cooperatives for the creation of value processes.

The three-year GE&A goal is to build 3,500 "farms" which will feed 300,000 people from 2009 to 2011.

Eventually, the GE&A mission of putting food on the table and eradicating hunger by establishing food sufficiency programs through multi-sectoral partnerships will be attained for the whole nation.

Finally, every day, there will be not only eating, but also performance monitoring, so that "bagas-sagot" will not occur.

Personal transformation

But Dimagiba said that an even greater achievement than increased productivity and decreased hunger is the personal transformation that he witnessed in the last two months. People who were despairing over the country's situation now found that they increased food production through their own efforts were giving them increased self-worth and dignity.

They wanted to get back their self-confidence, improved their relationships with their family members and helped lead their "farms," and solidified their relationships with the other GE&A members in their community.

What I saw last Wednesday was more than the GE stated strategy of "food for the families, houses for the homeless and food for the hungry." More significant was that GE gave hope to those who had almost lost it.

Because of this, we suggest that an additional urban agricultural (rural-bolibol) model be added for those who cannot even get 10 sq.m. of land. This are already (just) successfully in a GE village in Pagsing Silang, Quezon City, sponsored by the former de Manila University (dMU, 1965 and 1969 class. For more information on GE&A and offers to help, please visit www.bayanambon.com. You can also e-mail bangkoenterprises@gmail.com or text/call Jonah de Lumen at 917-5530344.

(The author is chair of Agrosouth, private industry for promotion of flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agrosouth@yahoo.com or telefax 632-8522122)

Recession drives BPOs to efficiency

Call centers scrutinize pay structure

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN is forcing Philippine-based contact centers to operate more efficiently and keep their costs down, as high operating expenses may make them uncompetitive.

Contact Center Association of the Philippines president Brandon Hernandez said the crisis had prompted firms to desire to look more closely at wage increases and the negative impact this could have on the industry vis-à-vis competitors such as India.

"The crisis has forced us to challenge wage inflation. According to a study by Watson Wyatt, wages in the industry have increased by 20 percent in 2008. By March 2009, however, the industry has changed its perspective," he said in a briefing.

He explained that combating wage inflation did not mean implementing pay cuts. This just means scrapping annual salary increases, to enable the country to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

"We now have a greater responsibility to temper costs. That should be an ongoing thing, and not just because of the crisis. You need that for country competitiveness. We don't want to price ourselves out of the market," he said.

Right now, he said BPO industry employees were some of the highest paid in the country, with most entry-level personnel enjoying wages and benefits that were well beyond the minimum required by law.

If the industry were to sustain its growth for the long term, he said temporary cuts should be a critical component of BPO firms' strategies.

"The industry has to have a responsible, sustainable growth strategy," he said.

Instead of implementing average wage increases of around 10 percent a year, he said BPO firms should look at giving out performance-based incentives instead.

The advanced announcement of holidays, which was what the government did this year, would also enable companies to better manage their labor costs, he reasoned.

"In making our business plans, we have to consider all the extra holidays that the government will declare because these affect our labor expenses. That is why an advanced declaration of holidays is good for us," he said.

Apart from keeping wages from spiraling out of control, he said CCAP as a group had also formed a "procurement council" that would help the organization's member-companies source lower priced equipment by way of volume orders.

According to CCAP, The procurement council is mandated to build professional partnerships with accredited vendors and service providers to maintain optimum advantage in a competitive market."

Hernandez cited Teleperformance as an example of purchases that CCAP members could good to take advantage of volume discounts.

CCAP currently has 116 member companies, including some of the biggest in the industry such as TeleTech, eTelecare Global Solutions, Sykes Asia, Accenture and Convergys.

PROPERTY

Edric Cesar D. Manganaang

ACCOMPLISHING: the opening ceremony of Building Green 2009 conference, Philippine President Gandy Prime Hernandez said ecosensible building design is another effective way to conse-

RP next green nation

Text and photos by Charles E. Rubio

Updated

WHILE THE CONCEPT of green architecture is widely practiced elsewhere as the world, the same could not be said here in the Philippines where environmental issues usually take a back seat to economic woes.

But this scene will change with the setting up of Berde.

REFORMACIO

BERDE

Literally means "green" in Filipino, Berde is short for Building Ecologically Responsive Design for Excellence, a certification program that will be used to evaluate buildings based on site selection, water and energy efficiency, materials used and indoor environmental quality, including air quality.

"If you can build a high-performing structure that saves the owner money, while also being better for the environment and also better for the people using the building, it just makes sense," said Ramon

BB B2..

SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail: pi_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Conan D. Mangoenong

Experts: slow down on meat, dairy to prevent frequent hospital trips

By Tessa R. Salazar

Reporter

RED MEAT AND WHOLE-fat dairy products have a lot in common. Both are high in fat and carry a possibility of bacterial and chemical contamination. It is commonly accepted today that limiting or eliminating red meat in the diet and using skimmed or no-milk products may be healthy practices for more people.

Renowned nutritionist Hedda A. Rabdo, DNC, explained this in her book "Prescription for Dietary Wellness." Rabdo's report cited the Food Animal Refuse Movement that revealed in the year 2000, 1.32 million—or 54 percent—of all deaths in the United States were attributable to diseases in which the consumption of animal products represents a substantial risk factor, according to a panel of physicians specializing in diet and health.

Endocrinologist Dr. Annabel Ignacia, author of the "Breast Cancer Prevention Program," said that "hormones, exposure to pesticides and industrial pollutants, 'genetic stimulating hormones used to fatten livestock by about 18 percent before slaughter are consumed, now virtually all our beef, with the exception of a small organic market."

He said homeowners in beef have received subcutaneous implants of hormones—effects of which the source is indeterminate. the FDA and Drug Administration and the cattle industry have been well aware for decades. Yet the red dangers they pose, especially when it comes to women and breast cancers, have remained by the shadows until the present.

Epidemiologists examined pork, veal, lamb, poultry and other cuts of meat, although uncontaminated by synthetic hormones, contains pesticides and a wide range of veterinary drugs.

Epidemiologists who is professor emeritus of environmental medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, also authored "What's In Your Milk?", an Exposé of Industry and Government Coverup on the Dangers of Genetically Engineered Milk. You're Drinking."

Things to avoid

Former Health secretary Dr. Alicia Ilarde's top things "to avoid as much as possible" ("How to Be Healthy at Any Age: 12 Steps to Achieve It") include animal meat, especially processed meat and animal milk and milk products, such as cheese.

Selden Tan cited the World Cancer Research Fund's report, Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective (2007). It is based on a five-year process spanning more than 7,000 clinical studies, and it declared that all people should immediately stop buying and eating processed meat products and that all processed meat should be avoided for life.

"Processed meats contain chemical additives that greatly increase the risk of various cancers, including colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, leukemia, brain tumors, and pancreatic cancer," he said.

Gilbert Tan continues: "Milk by itself is a good source of nutrients. Organic milk is still a good source of unbiased today. However, milk bought from the supermarket is full of hormones and chemicals injected by man in order to increase production. The US General accounting Office and the Consumer's Union, publisher of Consumers Reports magazine, have warned of the potential hazards to human health caused by consuming products derived from Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone or RGBH (or rBGH for short)."

Gilbert Tan told Inquirer Science/Health when asked about the link between animal protein and high blood pressure: "Unfortunately, our doctors and policy-makers are hesitant to confront the very real issues of hypertension due to the big business of processed and raw foods and, at least, reduce its consumption with less. We look to the day when processing animal RP will include ridiculous heavy taxes."

Ruth scientist Jane Plant, cancer survivor and the author of "The Healing Power: Cancer Prevention Program," said scientists have linked cow's milk consumption to a wide range of human health problems.

Milk is an excellent culture of medium for the growth and transmission of many unpleasant bacteria and organisms. She also said that a wide range of chemicals could be administered legally to dairy animals. These chemicals include antibiotics to treat infection and to promote growth, and antiparasitic drugs including those used against worms.

Milk allergy

Plant said that milk is one of the most common causes of food allergies and it is the single most common cause of allergy in infants citing a study at results of Allergy (Milk Allergy in Infancy).

"Milk proteins, which some people's bodies recognize as foreign proteins, have frequently been implicated in cases of eczema, asthma and migraine."

She cited a meeting of the American Society of Microbiology, suggesting that some of the thousands of cases of sudden infant death syndrome occurring in the United States every year might be attributed to cow's milk allergy in babies who are breast fed for less likely to succumb to SIDS.

Plant also stressed that "if you have native breasts, prostate, or colon cancer you should eliminate all animal products until you are better."

Dr. Richard Lucey, a prominent epidemiologist and FDA researcher 2005 for Bovine spongiform encephalopathy or better known as mad cow disease), said: "There is now an overwhelming scientific and medical case for avoiding the consumption of meat and animal products despite the government's attempts to persuade us otherwise."

Although animal products are not the only products that can be contaminated with bacteria, the vast majority of infected foods are red meat, dairy products, beef, eggs and seafood, according to Dr. Neil Nedley in his book "Food that Kills: How to Safely Combat Disease and Achieve Optimal Health through Nutrition and Lifestyle."

Other infected with diseases

Rabdo said animals raised for meat are often infected with diseases that often go undetected or are ignored by meat processors and inspectors.

"If an animal has cancer or a cancer, the disease part of the animal is cut away and the rest of the body is sold as pure. Yet it is possible that the disease may have circulated throughout the animal. Worse yet, the diseased parts may be incorporated into animal-meat products or hamburgers or meats."

Rabdo added that in addition to the 8,864 million animals reported in 1996 (United States Department of Agriculture), 2001 slaughter reports, another 500.5 million, or 9 percent of the total, suffered lingering deaths from illness, malnutrition, injury or other stress associated with today's factory farming practices.

Sharing creative initiative to the world

By Charles E. Bolton

THE LOUISE LOWES MEMORIAL Hero Award recognizes innovation, prevention approaches in promoting cardiovascular health in developing countries as well as communities where resource is limited, identifying innovators who mobilize people to live healthier lives.

Recently, the award's organizer, PHCSI, announced that the Philippines was among the year's finalists.

"We are so proud that the Foundation for Lay Education on Heart Diseases' 29 Original Songs for the Heart was chosen to be among this year's eight finalists by this global network that recognizes innovation in cardiovascular prevention," announced FLEHD founder and national president, Dr. Adolfo Belleville.

Dr. Belmod Lowes, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, founder of the defibrillator, and founder of PHCSI, created the award in 2007 to honor his late wife's lifelong commitment to the fight and well-being of others through her work as a social worker, activist and writer.

Belleville was informed that his project was chosen from 29 applications coming from 14 countries that included Nicaragua, Indonesia, Israel, Eritrea, Mauritius, Nigeria, Iran, South Africa, India, Nepal, Kenya and the United States.

Recognition

"Given if out every may not emerge as this year's recipient of the $2,000 (PHP97,000) award, the more fact that it was included among the finalists already enough recognition about the project's universal appeal," Belleville said.

With most of the lyrics written by Belleville, 29 Original Songs for the Heart were composed by classical pianist and lover Jeremiah Gloria.

"During my travels I often had myself doing several lives, most of them part of my lectures regarding heart diseases and how to prevent them, knowing how much Filipinos love music, I decided in 2004 to tap Cadiong on he could put melodies to these writings. My idea then was to have a unique, and hopefully, more effective way of bringing my message across to audience," Belleville revealed.

Final initially during FLEHD conferences and events, the 30 Original Songs For the Heart series later used in concerts featuring Cadiong as pianist. The Concert is as well as musical Duos to Remain Young at Heart: The Musical's performances for FLEHD supported.

The musical, he caught, was held at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium the PCHC Pilipinas, Apolinario Mabini Avenue and the performances included mixed musical pianist Ani Sobio, actresses, tenor Aryanna Cadiong, beat-tenor Beth Tegarra, tenor Rodel, featuring with the dance numbers provided by the Philippine Ballet Theater Choreographed by Pamela Aquinaldo.

"I was particularly proud of these two very successful FLEHD initiatives because I was able to impart my knowledge in a different way—through music that my Filipino audience easily relate to and appreciate," Belleville explained.

Support

What Belleville was most proud of was the fact that he was able to organize these concerts and musicals without spending a cent from the donor was able to get the support of eminent philanthropists in Dominic that included FLEHD chair Jose Concepcion, and board members Isadora Cojuangco, Stella Dungson, Dr. Alberto Romulo, Johnny Litton, Ronaldo Puno, Jaime Bautista, Dr. Robert Lingling Uy and Inyoman Gusti Made Wallace Pelelu.

"From day one, these groups and individuals have been very supportive of FLEHD's initiatives because they understood the necessity of the problem that cardiovascular diseases can make to society and the great potential for management of risk factors for cardiovascular diseases through preventive medicine," Belleville said.

BELLE STELLO (left) with Cadiong

Leading cause

He added that cardiovascular diseases—that included strokes, heart attack and coronary artery disease—is one of the leading causes of death worldwide and is responsible for more than a quarter of deaths in the developing countries.

"In the 21st century these diseases will continue to dominate the disease spectrum and death statistics in developing world, that included the Philippines. While getting data information across all segments of the population may be a challenge, there is always a way to accomplish this task," Belleville said.

Michael Jackson's death

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo, M.D.

MICHAEL JACKSON WAS ALWAYS a picture of limitless energy onstage. The day he died, his heart and the rest of his body simply ran out of energy, even just a little bit to remain a mobile heartbeat. Not even the presence of his personal physician in his side the very moment he breathed his last could help save his life.

Days after his death, pathologists who performed the autopsy on him still could not give an evident indication of what caused the king of pop's sudden death. There were more questions than answers after his autopsy. A few weeks earlier, Michael had just passed flight tests to make sure he was physically fit for the rigors of his forthcoming series of concerts.

Remain in the dark

How could someone with a supposedly strong and healthy heart suddenly succumb and about an response whatsoever to resuscitative efforts. Additional toxicology, neuropathology and pulmonary or lung tests are required, and until the results of these tests are available from to six weeks from now, the world will remain in the dark as to what really caused the death of one of the world's greatest, if not the greatest, artist who ever lived.

In all probability, the drugs Michael was taking played a major part. He was reported to be "heavily addicted" to the pain killer Diprocetin and received daily doses of it and of another pain killer, Demerol." Either of both drugs can cause suppression of breathing, drop in the blood pressure, and potentially fatal arrhythmias or irregular heartbeat. A combination of the two can have a potentiated effect which can also serve as the synergy of the side effects including shock and cardiac arrest.

Based on reports, Michael has been on pain killers since the early '90s with injury sustained after his hair caught fire during the filming of a soft drink commercial. A broken leg and a resultant overdose sustained which he fell off a stage during a concert, necessitated regularly taking these pain medications.

Regularly taking pain killer such as Oxycontin and Demerol for years inevitably leads to dependence and tolerance, such that bigger and bigger doses of these drugs are required to produce the same effects since repeated exposure to the drug is reduced. In fact, the patient dependent on these drugs can sometimes no longer distinguish the original reason for which the drug arise taken, i.e. pain, from the need for the desired pleasure or synthetic high one experiences after taking the drug.

Aside from the direct effects of the potent pain medications Michael was regularly taking, four other factors could have contributed to the sudden cardiorespiratory collapse of the pop icon. Dehydration, since he just finished with his supposedly physically intensive rehearsal, might have been a contributory factor. High doses of these pain killers suppress basic bodily functions such as breathing, coughing and thirst. One may be dehydrated but with the suppressed thirst sensation, the natural mechanism to restore fluid balance is compromised aggravating the resulting hypotension.

Nutritionally flair

Michael looked nutritionally flair at the time of his death likely due to the HCG diet he was on. Electrolyte imbalances might also have played a role. Electrolytes are substances in the body like potassium, sodium and magnesium a good balance of which is necessary for the functioning of vital body organs, especially the heart. People on an extreme low-calorie diet may end up with electrolyte imbalance which can make one prone to irregular heartbeat and circulatory collapse.

The intake of alcohol, cloves he did, together with the pain killers could also potentiate the side effects. The last possible contributory factor is the stress Michael might have felt with the rigid preparations for the series of concerts that should have worked his nerves.

Doctor Michael's physicians knew the added fact that Michael developed a fear for pain killers. Why then continued to fill prescriptions for these drugs, and no serious efforts made to get him off the drugs is one of the questions that beg for answers. Be all these matters are made in retrospect, with the full benefit of hindsight.

Spending only what might have been Michael's potentially serious or fatal problem he would have certainly been more difficult, but with the kind of speculation Michael could afford to pay, it's a wonder why the king of pop had to appear a bit too early to the King of Kings. If it's any consolation, with the kind of life he projected to his supernatural joy exhaustive and thereafter, Michael is more likely now in a place where there is no more pain, no more ailments, no more wounded, and no more heartaches.

Malling is easy from Little Baguio Terraces

SHOPAHOLICS OF THE PHILIPPINES, unite! Whether you're a busy fashionista, a well-heeled world traveler, a bargain hunter or just one who appreciates having everything at easy reach, Empire East's Little Baguio Terraces brings the comforts of the world to your feet. Located at one of the country's best shopping hotspots, this residence community in Greenhills, San Juan, puts residents at the center of malling culture yet provides a breezy retreat to the likeness of the summer capital it is named after.

Strategically located on Ortigas Boulevard right between two LRT-2 stations, Little Baguio Terraces lets you get around the metro quickly and confidently. Head east to Cainta's casinos and malls or the Antonio Gimo's shopping malls. Go west to J. Rizal Avenue and be in the think of the Divisoria shopping haven. Getting to Makati and Ortigas is a breeze through the MRT-3, which connects to Araneta stations. A great number of commercial establishments await to be explored, whatever form of transportation you take.

LITTLE Baguio Terraces is just a few minutes away from the metro's best shopping destinations.

Much-awaited family activity

"Malling has become a much-awaited family activity once the weekend arrives. With its strategic location, Little Baguio Terraces affords its residents to reach their destinations with ease and comfort," noted Empire East Land Holdings Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

For a bit of a boost, go for some retail therapy at the nearby Greenhills Shopping Center where you can find virtually everything at knockdown prices. From clothes and electronics to local handicrafts and precious pearls, the shopping mecca underscores a unique adventure, but it will hinder for quality goods at very reasonable prices. Add to that is a great variety of restaurants that await hungry shoppers.

Just a few minutes away are the Ortigas malls which include Robinsons Galleria, SM Megamall, The Podium, Shangri-La Plaza and Starmall, which all give you a choice to splurge or save depending on your mood and budget. Signature labels find their home here, but local brands are equally well placed. Aside from an amazing array of local establishments, there is also a wealth of spas, salons and clinics for your beauty and health needs.

Wealth of choices

To go further south, take a shortcut to Makati Mandaluyong Bridge and find yourself in the world-class financial district in the country. Here an unbelievable wealth of choices envelops you with a shop-happy feeling. Just off the bridge is the Power Plant Mall at Rockwell with its fascinating finds. Get lost in a maze of malls at Glorietta, SM Makati, Landmark and Greenbelt, all connected through walkways that let you shop rain or shine.

At both ends of the LRT-2 and MRT-3 rests here are the shopping centers of Quiapo and Divisoria, as well as Farmer's Cubao, Trinoma, SM The Block and SM North. Edsa malls, many of them connected to the train stations. With these many choices to choose from, Little Baguio Terraces holds a comfortable location next to life's many offerings. Here, you can find your own piece of retail heaven, yet enjoy a truly comforting space you can call your own.

THE CRAFTSMAN Bungalow-model home exemplifies Swiss inspiration.

Crosswinds' Delemont an enchanting escape south of the city

ON THE SLOPES OF THE highest point of Manila's lucrative weekend getaway gracefully sits a sanctuary where the spectacle of nature's beauty offers serenity for the weary urban warrior.

Brittany Corp., a proud member of the country's largest home builder Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc., took inspiration from Swiss architecture for Crosswinds. It is the nation's first property developer's response to the growing demand for a true home away from home. For beyond a mere vacation escape, it offers rest and rejuvenation in the midst of nature's majesty but with all the conveniences of modern living.

Welcome alternative

Crosswinds provides a welcome alternative to the swelling urban ills in the city. The cool air contains a comfortable sleep with the promise of a fresh start to the morning shell-tered under the towering trees scattered all over the property.

Delemont, the first phase of the gated model home, exemplifies the Swiss inspiration and vision of Crosswinds. This single detached (model) property is nestled on the slopes of Tagaytay's rolling terrain is not considered the greenest province—just some of those from 20,000 planted over the 100-hectare property. With an area of 160 square meters, it can be built in the custom home sizes, the reverse of which is Pine Trees 2.

Just like traditional homes in the Swiss Alps, Delemont has adopted the "great room" concept where guests are treated to a large, undivided room upon entering the home. Taking advantage of the lush landscape, the sprawling living room area is enhanced by large floor-to-ceiling windows that elegantly frame the magnificent greenery outside—providing a natural network as well as a soothing scenery for a calming ambience.

Also incorporated are other elements of Swiss architecture such as the steel-hardwood look of the façade, the street signs and the blooms that line pathways to recreate the favored European destination and the outdoors that is evident.

Crosswinds cover 100 hectares of prime property. With over 50 hectares of integrated development with a mix of single-detached houses, charrets, cluster and mid-rise condos, it is the perfect hideaway for recovering, rejuvenating and renewing both body and mind.

Taking full advantage of the natural slopes and vantage points of the Tagaytay terrain, the Swiss theme is also present in the charming Gourmet Village which features the garden café and chill (book behind chalet), organic market (fresh produces), Chateaux store and hill-top chapel. Plus, the swimming pool provides a place to cool off during the warm summer months. Lastly, Crosswinds will have its own Wellness enclave offering relaxing Swiss spas and invigorating massages.

Accessible

Motor cars buses from Makati, Crosswinds is accessible through either the Sta. Rosa or MX SLEX toll exits or via the Aguinaldo Highway, passing through Silang, Cavite. From Lipa, Batangas, Crosswinds can be reached through the STAR tollway, exiting at Sto.Tomas.

Brittany is a successful real estate developer of innovative and creative lifestyles. Its eclectic and vibrant portfolio includes Bonifacio Place, Pineda, Georgia Club, Avant at the Fort, 8L Mansio in Legaspi and Mondo at Greenbelt. With many-splendored developments steeped in elements, stylistic and thematic appeal, rich architectural details and exuberant craftsmanship, it succeeds fully and consciously surrounds the local real estate landscape.

These BPO workspaces offer easy access to untapped labor pools

BEYOND THE HIGH-RISE BPO OFFICES by some business process outsourcing (BPO) centers, may be unfolding in the next wave of emerging as the next hot spot in the IT-BPO industry southern cities to begin their work day at around 8 p.m. and end it in the wee hours of the morning when public transport is scarce, according to industry studies.

Phillip Antoniewicz, managing director for markets of Jones Lang LaSalle Leechin, which has acquired over a hundred sites in the Philippines for at least 20 contact center clients, explains that the idea creates BPO office spaces with superior access to major transportation lines have an edge over other similar properties.

2 projects

Two projects cater to major thoroughfares in Quezon City and intended for BPOs have been developed by Iron Properties Philippines Inc. Antoniewicz points out that in the current competition for workers, many BPO offices are now moving where they can find labor pools such as those around the Ortigas and Katipunan areas where University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila and Miriam College among other schools are located. Iron Cyberpod Century Avenue on the strategic corner of Quezon Avenue and Edsa apparently taps this Ortigas-Metro Manila labor force.

With 30,000 sq m of office space over eight floors that are now available, Iron Cyberpod Centris is located in a 12-hectare township envisioned as a self-contained community with a lifestyle and retail area, residential and office buildings and a businessmen's hotel. It has been master-planned as an active urban center where residents can easily walk to work, then stroll to dining places, stores and entertainment areas after hours.

Attractive

"It will have the big-city vibe that is an attractive to the current breed of BPO workers," Antoniewicz says. He adds that Jones Lang LaSalle Leechin has distinguished itself as the real estate services sector by its select roster of BPO client firms.

Moreover, Iron Centris will have direct access to the MRT station at Quezon Avenue via its retail development, Centris Station. In addition, the township is serviced by most modes of public transport that ply routes for the City of Manila, Cainta and Taytay.

Both Centris and Cyberpod offer spaces that fully meet the needs of BPO firms for contiguous floor-to-ceiling power and redundancy. Both projects have also been planned to meet the needs of well-populated BPO firms.

STUDIES by Jones, Lang, LaSalle, Leechin point out that BPO spaces close to skilled labor pools are better appreciated by contact center clients. The Iron Cyberpod Centris in Quezon Avenue corner Edsa, for instance, will be particularly attractive to potential employees residing near the UP-Ateneo area and other residential areas in Quezon City as well as Manila.

Ultimately, both properties are attractive to BPOs because they allow their labor forces easy access to work and a shorter commute time.

"These advantages, in addition to location near retail areas and malls that offer basic needs, mean better work-life for BPO workers," according to Antoniewicz. As competition for talent in the outsourcing industry becomes keener, opportunities to achieve better work-life balance will spell the difference for BPOs.

The Capital Towers marks . . . From page B2-1

"The Capital Towers," narrates Isaac Fernandez, vice president for Product Planning of Megaworld, "is our flagship project in Quezon City. We are very proud of our unit layouts and space management. Our windows are almost floor-to-ceiling, and that seldom happens in a condo unit. We are also proud of our concealed sanitary piping system."

Solidbilt is a concealed sanitary piping system ensuring confinement of plumbing pipe work to the unit only eliminating the need to disrupt the unit tenant below. This system is so foolproof, efficient water management system—advancing the need for sustainable eco-living.

The units, ranging in sizes 131 to 135.5 sq m, are limited in canonical enclosed arrangements (living, dining and bedrooms), concise functions, toilet and bath) and are fortified with kitchens have cabinet, laminated doors, granite countertop and splashboard.

Facilities, amenities

The tower facilities, meanwhile, will also include a fire alarm and detection system, a water sprinkler system, 24-hour standby generator system, three high-speed elevators. The Athens Tower also boasts of a Greek-inspired lobby, complete with a mural of historical figures within bronze, immediately transporting residents and visitors into a quick getaway mode.

The residential tower also boasts of receiving information for every unit to ensure efficient pool laminate colors anyone that are right on it. The landscaped podium garden makes it easier to commune with nature.

Exercise buffs will enjoy the gym/fitness center and the jogging path. Alternately they can take a dip at the swimming pool. The fitness area also links at the children's area and daycare. The multipurpose hall is the ideal setting for parties and other momentous occasions. At the podium mini deck, one can take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Completion of The Capital Towers is expected within 2010.

TABLE advantage of the sun landscape, the sprawling living room area boasts of large floor-to-ceiling windows that elegantly frame the spectacular view.

RP next green nation From page B2-1

Fernando Rufino, Building Green 2009 conference chair.

Building Green is a conference and expo series held every year by the Philippine Green Building Council to raise awareness on the several key sustainability issues that affect the country.

Higher rental

He explained that a Berde-certified building is expected to command higher rental rates as well as lower vacancy rates than comparable conventionally built buildings.

"In other countries where there is such a rating system, green buildings are found to generate 2.3 percent higher occupancy rates, 3 percent higher rental rates and have a 6.8 percent improved return on investment. Additionally, green buildings are an average increase of 7.5 percent in building values compared to conventionally constructed buildings," explained Rufino who is also The Bank Group vice president.

For more updates these, PhilGBC chair Christopher Jose Cruz explained that green buildings produce either returns in the building owner and in occupants such as improved indoor environmental quality, reduced energy usage, increased employee productivity, reduced employee absenteeism and reduced impact on the building's external environment.

"These translate into improved performances of the building and its occupants, and benefit the building owners in no significant, directly," the architect said.

The Berde project, which is expected to be finalized by the end of this year, shall be administered and implemented by a multi-sectoral body that the board of the PhilGBC will appoint. From among its members to ensure a workable and scientifically balanced green building rating system.

Hesitance

United Architects of the Philippines Davao Architecture Movement chair architect Felipe Rodriguez pointed that the development is very encouraging considering that in previous years there is a huge hesitance in the side of developers and property owners because green is always viewed in expenses.

"But, initially, it can be more expensive... around 10 percent higher... when compared to the traditional building practice but if you calculate the benefits, practicing green architecture actually provides more savings and return of investment because it requires less maintenance," Rufino also explained.

He said that although green architecture is not yet widely practiced in the country, there are already existing models that have used the concept such as the previous projects of the Manila group, SM Mall of Asia, the BCBC Towers, and the various projects built by the Ayala Group or the Southern Global City.

"Some even tried to seek the certification of United States' Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. However considering the payments required—that could reach tens of millions of pesos—they realized it's no longer cost-efficient and chose to just train for the Berde certification program to be implemented here," Rufino said.

Megaworld Economist Dennis Isaac Revita has added that it will not only be the developers and property owners who will benefit from the launch of Berde.

"Manufacturers and distributors of building materials and those of energy and water-efficient appliances and fixtures, will benefit since they will have to be considered first and foremost over their competitors/contenders," Revita said.

Rufino added that green building strategies are good for everyone's pocketbook, saying that these strategies in reduce maintenance, replacement requirements and utility bills, lower the overall cost of building ownership, and increasing property and resale values.

How climate change affects our health

Overview

ACCORDING TO THE INTER-governmental Panel on Climate Change, increased global temperature rises of 1.5 to 6°C would lead to the loss of Greenland and the western Antarctic ice sheets by the middle of the next century, raising sea levels by up to 12 meters.

Considering that a third of the world's population lives within 60 miles of a shoreline and 13 of the world's 20 largest cities are located on the coast, a 12-meter rise in sea level would displace a billion people or more in addition.

Water supply

Buildings in Metro City are sinking due to overexploitation of the aquifers under the city and the water distribution network is losing 40 percent of water.

Aquifers are underground reservoirs that can be tapped for water when wells are dug until they reach the top of the aquifer. This layer is called the water table. The water table sinks when a considerable amount of water is pumped from an aquifer is during dry periods.

Reduced river flows and increased water temperatures will lead to declining water quality as the dilution of water contaminants are reduced, less oxygen is dissolved in water and microbiological activity is increased.

Buildings and communities

Cities of the future need to adapt to climate change. First, they have to contribute less to the causes of climate change by minimizing waste, reducing consumption and preserving open space. Cities must construct green buildings and green communities that encourage walking to reduce carbon emissions and fight the global problem of obesity. Second, they must be climate resilient and must be able to cope with the risks of climate change.

What can you and I do?

Our personal rate of consumption and waste creation is bounded in our hands. We are using resources 25 percent faster than they can be replaced. Zero waste must be everyone's goal and this can be achieved by conserving and recycling. Methane to fuel the 21st century economy. Sustainable consumption means knowing what we need from what we want.

Less useless living is an architectural ideal. The biggest energy guzzlers are houses and cars. Greater consumer leather, energy and other resources, and excess waste. The middle-class household produces yearly 1,500 pounds of garbage, 400,000 gallons of wastewater and 25,000 pounds of carbon dioxide.

Convenience in safe cute outer harvesting during the long rainy season. Instead of building concrete gardens which is a very outdated practice, we can build underground water cisterns to store rain water for watering plants and flushing toilets. There are tax incentive open and green spaces above the ground and be more environmentally responsive.

Accessible information on the life cycle of economic products and our energy usage should point closer to the community level. NGOs, pressure groups, local communities, school children should take an active interest in methods of adaptation to climate change.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail greenarchitrends@gmail.com.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

ANGELO *de Jesus*

A GREEN RIBBON is being planned in Toronto, Canada by adding a green roof as an expressway and converting it into a park with trees, bike paths and recreation areas. It includes solar panels and wind turbines to power new lighting along the highway. The concept is expected to reduce maintenance costs and improve public safety for the highway.

The Capital Towers marks construction progress

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TO MARK THE COMPLETION of federal Land's premier development in Quezon City, The Capital Towers—a topping-off ceremony was held recently.

This activity underscores Federal Land's commitment to deliver on its promise not only to expand to completion dates, but also with the creation of a development that would endow a unique and lively community lifestyle experience; a spacious residential/working city.

Top officials from Federal Land, led by its president, Alfred Ty, as well as members of its project team... Emerard, Rodriguez, Asuncion & Partners and LA Campbell & Associates Inc.... graced the ceremonial occasion.

FEDERAL Land officials, led by Alfred Ty (center), its president, during the topping-off rite

Exceptional landmark

Situated on E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, one of Quezon City's prime areas, The Capital Towers is set to become an exceptional landmark, offering an unprecedented luxurious and dynamic lifestyle. Spread across an 8,000 sq.m. lot, The Capital Towers offers a fully equipped community chic, allowing residents easy access to schools, hospitals, churches, banks and other necessary amenities.

The project's proximity to intersections like the St. Luke's Medical Center, Tomas Morato, Kamuning, Timog, Quezon Avenue, Araneta Center, Cubao, Eastwood, Bonifacio Global City, Ortigas Center, Greenhills, Wilson, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, Makati City, Ayala Avenue, Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Legaspi Village, Rockwell, Power Plant Mall, Glorietta, Greenbelt, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Museum, Ayala Center, Greenbelt, Makati Stock Exchange

Inquirer Exclusive

In 6th outing, Harry Potter is darker, scarier

By Rod S. De Vera

A STARTLING REALIZATION STRIKES THE viewer from the very first scene of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," a mid-cloudy morning I smack by the Death Eaters on London's brilliant Sun Bridge. This isn't anything like the book.

TOM FELTON as Draco Malfoy

DANIEL Radcliffe as Harry Potter in Warner Bros. Pictures' fantasy "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince"

That is exactly what is going on with director David Yates' adaptation of the sixth novel in J.K. Rowling's Hogwarts series. In a much more dramatic weekend what they did for 2004's "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," Yates and screenwriter Steve Kloves have essentially draped a Cloak of Invisibility over some 70 percent of the 652-page novel.

Kinder chapters of the book have disappeared. And it works—brilliantly.

Yates' transformed "Prince" is a smaller, crisp film that moves confidently from scene to scene.

The character and the franchise grow up quickly in the somber and brilliant new film

Additionally, Yates has seen to it that film fully in a truly distinctive creation apart from the novel, an overly slavish devotion to the source material had weighed down Chris Columbus's first foray in the series.

Fully formed

"Prince" feels like a fully formed film all by itself. What we get there is an increasingly revealing reflection on growing up.

MARK YU

DAVE Legano (centre) as Fenrir Greyback

Inquirer Exclusive:

In 6th outing, Harry Potter is darker, scarier

From page C1

Returning to Hogwarts after the death of Sirius Black in "Order" Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) and Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) are now moving about in a world unsure that the Dark Lord Voldemort has been removed.

Hogwarts Headmaster Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) has hired the Dark Lord's former teacher, Horace Slughorn ("Maiden Voyage" alternate Jim Broadbent) to coach potions to an attempt to find out more. Harry also suspects that Slytherin prefect Draco Malfoy (Tom Felton) is up to no good, and that Professor Severus Snape (oddly effective Alan Rickman) is in league with the Death Eaters.

Quidditch makes a dynamic, involving return. While all of that is going on, Ron gets a girlfriend and Harry is desperate Ron's baby sister Ginny (graceful Bonnie Wright).

Slow burn

"Prince" starts with a slow burn, an seemingly innocuous things start to add up to a danger our sun. As hormonally agitated Harry sees what's happening but no one seems to believe him.

As he and Dumbledore seemingly get closer to finding a way to destroy Voldemort, the turning point of the entire series happens suddenly irrevocably, in what amounts to a very gripped-down finale. First: if you know what's going to happen, the treachery and tragedy at the heart of "Prince" is stunning when it occurs.

Hardcore Potter fans will be disappointed at just how much has been left out from "Prince" – even though "Prince" drinks in at two hours and 33 minutes, so comic, some of the film's business (like who exactly the half-blood Prince is) to deal with rather abruptly.

Still, "Prince" felt overloaded as a book and that problem is solved here. Characters are described in motion of scenes with superb performances. It is also a thrill to see just how grown-up the actors have gotten.

This is really here eight years since "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" introduced us to the students of Hogwarts? The square-jawed Radcliffe and the prodding Watson, in particular, are exquisite themselves as what amounts to a polarized duel of young wizards.

As Dumbledore, Gambon occupies his role with an authoritative determination. While Yates plays much of the romantic high jinks for laughs and some chewiness, he also makes it clear that this is the Hogwarts gang's first brush with real affliction – and the results are fetchingly bittersweet.

Mature, disturbing

Be warned that this is a very mature, somewhat disturbing film. There are dramatic swells, big scenes, such as the attack of the Inferi. The film may be rated PG, but it is clearly too much for young children.

More than the creatures, it is the heartrending emotional moment that strike deep, from the film's design and music feel come another, more restrained. Everyone ends something is growing up.

With this, only one book to the series remains. Yates directs "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" is now anticipated re-millennia, as for the fall of 2010 and the summer of 2011.

Both will have a tough act to follow, because "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" is, surprisingly, the best of the Potter movies yet as the franchise finally comes to age. This is "The Empire Strikes Back" for the Hogwarts universe in all its dark glory.

Evil is upon us. We hear voices with the awe and hope of reverential true believers.

"Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" opens in Metro Manila theaters on July 16.

BACK at Hogwarts

ALAN Rickman as Severus Snape

2BU EXCLUSIVE

Harry Potter digs karaoke

Daniel Radcliffe talks about table tennis, indie rock and his new movie

IS IT HOT TO BE MEN IN other things, especially in a serious role on stage such as Equus?

No. Harry is brilliant, and I love playing him, but I do want to establish myself as someone other than that character. Equus did seem a bit of a change and some people were expecting I would fail, as the fact that I didn't is something I've enjoyed!

"Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" is the sixth Harry Potter film. Do you think there will be mixed emotions when you finish shooting the next films?

Definitely. It will be very, very odd to suddenly not be coming back as Harry Potter. It does not as a reality set in a way, when you're going off to make something. Knowing that you don't have that will be sad. I'll be sad to leave the character behind and not see the friends I've made on a daily basis.

The Harry Potter films seem have become a touchstone for most part of your life. Do you ever look back over early films in the series and see how you have developed?

There's a certain amount of cringe in my own performance, so I don't look back on the early films. I probably should watch them and take the positives from the way my performances have improved and developed over the years, but it's a little embarrassing to see yourself and hear yourself at that age. When I eventually do look back it will be very interesting.

Rupert tells us you're improving as the gamers of table tennis that you play when you are relaxing between scenes on "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince." But he says that Emma really knocks everyone else out.

Yes, and it's really irritating that Emma is so good [Laughs.] Rupert and I had been playing for about eight months and working on each other's game. Then Emma comes in and is absolutely brilliant. Bitcher of us could have her. I have got better but I'm never going to take Emma on again.

You have always been a big fan of indie rock, so what are your music discoveries this year?

A band called Vampire Weekend are on my fix sheet. There's a girl called Laura Marling, whose lyrics are amazing, a girl called Adel is great, too. One of my favorite albums last year was by The Pigeon... "Love, Lust And Desperation." There's another band whom nobody seems to have heard of called Beirut. They've had two albums and they're both absolutely fantastic. I'd encourage anyone to buy them. I like Mars Volta and I loved My Chemical Romance's last album, even though I never liked anything they ever did before that.

So are you really a frustrated rocker?

No, I don't have enough talent to do that. If I suddenly discovered I was an amazing guitarist, that would be great, but I don't think that's going to happen.

And do you have a go at karaoke?

I'm brilliant at karaoke, actually. "Bush and Fall Outside" by Bowie is my specialty. I have been away singing that on the Equus stage party.

Back to the world of Harry Potter Will "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" show another side of Harry?

There's lessons in this film; it has much more to do with love and Hermione than with Harry. Harry is mostly unhappy in this film, mainly because people keep trying to kill him. And his lovelife is awful, too. That's what it's all about. [Laughs] so well. Continuing everyday, mundane problems with this incredible other world.

"HARRY is brilliant, and I love playing him, but I do want to establish myself as someone other than that character."

2BU EXCLUSIVE

Hermione is all grown up

'If I never go to University and all I do is this, how can I relate to someone taking a bus?'

SEE YOU HAPPY TO BE back on the Harry Potter film set?

I'm quite keen to get back into the swing of it. Everyone was pleased to see me because a number things have really picked up.

How tough has it been in this movie starting a romance on screen with Ron, especially since he's played by an old friend?

Ooh! I don't know if it's tough. Rupert's a really laid-back guy but I'm really looking forward to it because I quite like the romantic comedy side of it. Rupert and I end up provoking fight relief in the films get darker. It's funny seeing Rupert struggling in the romantic scenes. Hermione and Rupert are so different yet they have this chemistry so it's interesting. It'll be awkward doing those love scenes, there's no other way to put it, but it's all part of the job!

How great did it feel to win a Best Actress award at the MTV Movie Awards?

It was so lovely. I genuinely didn't expect to win it. It wasn't just about "Order of the Phoenix." It was about all the films and I was delighted that the public had voted for that award. It's one of my proudest moments.

What are your anniversary plans?

I'm pretty sure I'm going to take English Literature and I'm going to apply for Cambridge. Durham, Bristol or Edinburgh. There are massive holidays so it wouldn't be impossible to fit some projects in during that time, but I want to put in the studies first. I want to be able to work and have a reason for the rest of my life. Josie Pearson and Natalie Pennan have done it and they're both brilliant. It was being so much more on a role when you're not full time anymore. If I never go to University and all I do is this, how can I relate to someone taking a bus? I want time to go off and figure out who I am.

Does working on Harry Potter feel different now that all three of you have done different projects?

Yes, and it was really nice to be able to sit down and talk to Dan and Rupert about the projects they had been working on, and how different it was to work on stage and TV. It's given us all more confidence as actors because we were thrown in young for the Potter films, so it was important to me to do "Bullet Boys." I found so much from that experience.

Think back to that day in the birthday shoot in London when you were all playing Monopoly and you were about to go into Order Board in the world's press, did you have any inkling of the huge changes in your life that were about to happen?

I think I was too young to realize that, though obviously I was terrified. I wasn't thinking about JK Rowling writing seven books and seven films. I wasn't doing the math and I wasn't thinking about the popularity of the series. Nobody had a clue that the film would become the most successful film franchise of all time.

So what have been the big "Hmm" moments over the years?

The first was when we were told we had got the parts and we stayed in a fancy hotel for the press conference. I remember sitting in a massive bed jumping around watching myself on the TV evening news. It was mad. We also did a premiere at the Kodak Theatre Hall in New York and I remember looking up at all the people and saying wow!

What about the perks and getting stuff from, say Chanel?

It's amazing getting sent these dresses because I've always loved their clothing. They are the best. If anyone was going to dress me for a premiere, it was going to be Chanel. I physically don't have time to go out anymore to buy clothes for events, so they send me clothes and it works really well. I also consider it a perk that I get to travel and get to work with the people I've worked with. What other job would have given me all these opportunities?

Do you keep a diary?

I do have early diaries filled with fancy little things I said or thought. I also have memory boxes filled with things from the early films, including bits of the sets cut. I have funny bits and pieces that they let me keep.

Might all of that be helpful for an autobiography one day?

No, I couldn't see myself doing that. It's too strange and weird looking to go back to that little girl. I'm very self-critical so I find it hard to watch the early films again. "Order of the Phoenix" was a film I was proud of, but I had to watch it three or four times before I could calm myself down and stop focused on my performance.

Is it weird in that you have been banned from playing table tennis by the two guys because you're too good.

Hahaha. I really hope they will let me play again because I really like it. I was quite a cowboy as a kid and played a lot of sports.

What's in your dressing room at the studio?

Rupert has darts, pool, table tennis and all these games consoles. Dan's room is full of books and music. I was so bored one day that I painted a big mural in my dressing room. Otherwise, it's all very girly with couches and soft furnishings.

"I'M VERY self-critical so I find it hard to watch the early films again."

Jean pool

Warming up

Hot hues of pink and orange boost the coolness factor of your denim topper

Orange striped tee, P225; Terranova; green checkered polo shirt, P 1,950 and denim jackets, P4,150 both from Mango; fuchsia shirt, P499; Folded & Hung; purple bead necklace, M.I.C. at SM Department Store; pink necklace, stylist's own; black character pin, Folded & Hung; satin embellished bracelet, price available upon request, Holly; orange shoulders (used as bracelet), stylist's own; green enamel bracelets, P1,150 (sold as set) and yellow parasol belt, P1,150 both from Terranova; purple socks (all), Penshoppe

Bleached to perfection

An acid-washed jumpsuit hits the high mark on this season's must-have list.

Orange and fuchsia striped tank, P345, Bayo; denim jumpsuit, Orizaki; orange enamel necklace, Classic Charms; character pins, Folded & Hung; green resin bangles, Forma; yellow resin bangle, Mango; fuchsia painted belt, P2,950, ASO; yellow canvas belt, P339, Terranova; green belt, Benetton; fuchsia nylon case, P1,250, Mango; green ombre scarf, P695, Penshoppe; blue sunnies/case, P695, Kenzo's.

Fade into blue

Work this trend easily with a pair of cuffed, relaxed fit denim shorts.

Yellow cardigan, P 1,950 and pink striped tee, P 1,850 both from Gap; denim shorts, P695, Folded & Hung; bead necklace, Printed; multi-colored rhinestone (used as bracelet), P45.75, M.I.C. at SM Department Store; orange hair, Penshoppe at The Bench; clutch bag, P895, Terranova; green canvas tote, P3,450, Lounge By at Rustan's; multi-colored striped socks, P 149.75, Dickies at SM Department Store; blue denim sneakers, P1,695, Printed

JEAN POOL C3

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Chocolate Cakes From The Heart

When Marie and Nelson Balcoba started Mel-Nel's Cake Shop in January 2006, it was the welfare of the family and relatives that was foremost in their minds. It was really out of necessity that we started: a movement Baking was not a hobby for me but when so many people depended on us, we persevered and have grown to love it," explains Marie. Little did they know that their endeavor would lead to success beyond their imagination.

"Alaska Milk has been our brand of choice ever since. Our chocolate cakes will never be the same without it!"

Tough Beginnings

As a young age, Marie lost her father and became the head of the family. She quit school and worked to provide for her mother and siblings. She invested the P600 they received from bereavement benefits on a small oven, a hand mixer and some pots and pans. She taught herself to bake simple recipes like chiffon cakes, pies, tarts and breads and started taking orders from neighbors and friends to supplement their family's income. All of those she did while working at the University of the Philippines Los Baños Food Service Unit as a general food service worker. There, she met her future wife and husband, Nelson, who was working as a baker, cake decorator, and driver. Like her, Nelson had to stop from school to support his family. They constantly worked together and soon their relationship blossomed into romance. The beginning of their life together was tough for the young couple who toiled 18 hours a day. In the morning, they worked at UPLB Food Service and at night, they baked orders from friends and neighbors.

Perfecting the Recipe

The first chocolate cake they made was appraised so bitter as they listened to their customers' feedback and kept adjusting ingredients to improve their product and satisfy their clients. It was a series of trial and error before the couple perfected the recipe for their now famous chocolate cake. But it's hard work paid off. Marie and Nelson created a cake that was rich and had the right bite to it. Their customers loved it. "The recipe has not changed at all and we've already standardized it. The ingredients make our cakes special. Alaska Milk has been our brand of choice ever since. I remember a time when there was a shortage of Alaska Condensed Milk. We really went to the small sari-sari stores just to get every can of Alaska Condensed Milk we could find! Our chocolate cakes will never be the same without it and customers can taste the difference when we switch ingredients," says Marie.

All the Heart of It

How they became known for heart-shaped cakes is another story. When Nelson was working at the International Rice Research Institute, the couple was asked to sell cakes for the institute's annual fund raising. The first cakes they sold were heart-shaped pineapple chiffon cake and vanilla cake with butter icing. "The butter icing easily melted so as an alternative, we offered our heart-shaped chocolate cakes." And it clicked. All-year-round customers took for these sweet heart-shaped chocolate cakes that have become Mel-Nel's trademark.

Mel-Nel's: The Little Cake Shop That Could

With a steady stream of orders for their cakes, the couple decided to open a small shop in January 2008 at the Grove in Crystal Avenue, Los Baños, Laguna. "My husband and I invested time, sweat, tears and even blood to build this business," states Marie. Through sheer hard work and determination, they were able to establish Mel-Nel's as Laguna's premier cake shop. Their famous heart-shaped chocolate cakes grace the tables in every special occasion and family gathering in Laguna, and even beyond. "When I retired from work and started baking full-time, my prayer was just to sell three cakes a day for my family to get by. Ironic Marie. But God had bigger plans for Marie and her family. From three cakes a day, they started selling 20, then 30 and so on.

This tiny cake shop in the Grove still remains but they now have a three-storey building along Km. 54 in Laguna called Mel-Nel's Place. Many people thought the Balcobas won the lottery when they saw the building. They could not believe that it all started from a little cake shop. But as the Balcobas have proven, necessity is indeed the mother of invention and perseverance the father of success.

Written by | Alinsea Mel Dcampo

Photographed by | William Ong

ALASKA

Walang tatalo 'pag Alaska ang kasama.

MU SIGMA PHI SORORITY LAUNCHES DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Seventy-five years of glory. Mu Phi Sigma Pi Sorority, on its 75th year of existence, launches its Diamond Anniversary celebration during their recent events, held last June 17 at the University of the Philippines Manila.

To commence its seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations, the Mu Sigma Phi Sorority, the first duly-recognized medical Sorority in Asia, held its Grand Launch last June 17 at the College of Medicine, University of the Philippines - Manila. In this evening of triumphant reminiscence and meaningful merriment, the Sorority presented its roster of activities for the year, all of which highlight the Pillars the Sorority has upheld throughout its existence: Sisterhood, Service, Scholarship, and Leadership.

Festivities opened with a prayer from Joanne Macanas (UP-CM 2011) and Michaela Lipana (UP-CM 2012) and welcoming remarks from Dr. Lorna Ramos-Abat (UP-CM 1980). An inspirational speech was given by Dr. Thelma Baaoanda-Clemeño (UP-CM 1985), founder and director of the Capitol Medical Center, followed by the unveiling of the Grand Diamond and the raising of a toast to seventy-five years of glory, the latter led by Dr. Lilibeth Gonzales (UP-CM 1997). Fireworks capped the night and formally ushered in the Sorority's year-long diamond celebration.

Over 120 members of the Sorority, along with members of the Mu Sigma Phi Fraternity, attended the Grand Launch. The event was headed by Dr. Fides Galvez-Flores (UP-CM 1981) and Johanne Uy (UP-CM 2012) and was hosted by Elaine Lorenzo and Most Exalted Sister Rochelle Castillo (UP-CM 2010). Among the distinguished guests were UP President Emerlinda Roman, Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Director Gerardo Alfiler, MD, FPCP, FCP, UP Manila Chancellor Ramon Arnaldo and UP College of Medicine Dean Alberto Roxas. The event was also attended by members of the UP Manila community.

In keeping with its commitment to service, the Mu Sigma Phi Sorority also launched the second leg of SmiliCity, a free vaccination program for students of the UP College of Medicine from Year 1B and 1S. Free Flu and HPV vaccines were administered to two hundred students. The first leg of SmiliCity was held last March, which headed of HPV vaccines given to a hundred PGH employees; meanwhile, the third and last leg of SmiliCity for this year was last June 22-24 and featured hundreds of Hepatitis B and Typhoid vaccines administered to medical students.

Nothing short of this auspicious start is expected of the Mu Sigma Phi Sorority, and its upcoming projects are sure to live up to its tradition of excellence. First up among these is Brilyante: The Empowered Woman, a socially gala-fashion presentation for the Cervical Cancer Prevention (CERCAP) Outreach Program through the Cancer Institute Foundation of the PGH, set for August 26, 2009 at the MBC Tent in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Indeed, after seventy-five years, the Mu Sigma Phi Sorority continues its dedication to excellence and brilliance—a pledge it intends to uphold for years to come.

White cotton top, P549, Folded & Hung; yellow cardigan, P2,295, Gap; fuchsia graphic tee, P898, New Breed Global Nation's denim pleated skirt, P499.75, Body at SM Department Store; fuchsia necklace, P90, Landmark; satin resin-linked bracelet, price available upon request, Philly; blue studded bracelets, P129.75 (sold as set), M.I.C. at SM Department Store; purple enamel bracelet, P 195 (sold as set), Sunaryo; denim sneakers, P1,695, Penneck; green tie (worn as scarf), P895, Bench; light-washed jeans, P1,295, Salsa jeans; pink-studded bracelets, price available upon request, both from Salsa (worn around), P999, Forevernet; jeans with patches, P6,990, Rough

From page 1

Jean pool

It's a reprise of the '80s with acid wash and neon

Think pink, kid

Assert your zest for pop of the '80s with tiers of neon hues and layers of bubblegum accessories paired with your faded-washed denims.

Blue sweater, P1,450, Gap; yellow graphic tee, P1,950, AX; light-washed jeans, P1,295, Salsa jeans; beaded hoop earrings, price available upon request and resin colored bead necklace, both from Rough; orange necklace, P80, Landmark; blue-tiered bracelet, Claire Chang; maroon ring, Fiona; fuchsia tote, P559, Terranova; orange sneakers and green keychain, both stylin's own; orange graphic messenger bag, P1,650, Hang Ten Canvas; as flower's purple slip-on sneakers, P895, Candie's; The Ramp

BIG SOUND 04:24 THE M'S
NEAT LITTLE PACKAGE 03:06 STEVIE CEE
CRY FOR MERCY 06:18 BIG STUF
IN YOUR EARS 04:00 DOUBLE F

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Ateneans win 'Best of the Best' at young entrepreneur tilt in Hong Kong

By Wenggie Gallego

TEAM: Ateneans are every question.

ON THE 28TH FLOOR OF the impressive HSBC tower on Queen's Road in Central, Hong Kong, six teams of students dressed in their best business attire shook off their nerves and prepared to outpresent each other in the HSBC Young Entrepreneur Awards (HYEA).

The teams were from Malaysia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Brunei, Philippines and Thailand. All were champions from their respective national competitions. The silver and bronze teams from each country were there to give support and to partake in the week-long mentoring subsidy was granted towards opening young minds to the world of business and entrepreneurship.

"First launched in Hong Kong in 2000, the HSBC Young Entrepreneur Award is an annual business plan writing competition which challenges young people to work together to create innovative and commercially viable business ideas." According to the event's program, "it is designed to motivate young people's interest in entrepreneurship and enhance their business acumen."

Based on the scores of judges, this was no small-fry competition. It included high-level executives of HSBC and ING, co-founder Po Chung. The head judge was HSBC CEO Sandy Peckham.

The students had to impress these judges with a 10-minute presentation and answer all their questions in for consideration the "Best of the Best."

Strong and confident

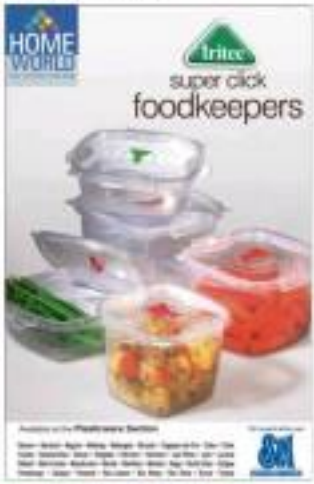
Team Malaysia was up first, sounding too strong and confident. Their idea was a powered biodegradable oil control film, much like the facial oil-blotting blue paper we always see in the trash cans of restaurants in dubs and malls.

The Bangladesh team—three young men in smart suits...was a nervous wreck. Their voices cracked and their hands showed their fear. Their product was aimed to help solve the water crisis in Bangladesh, but the moment the Q&A began, their business model began to fall apart.

The Hong Kong team came on much stronger than Malaysia. Two young men and a lady in color-coordinated gray and black suits came in. Their presentation was like a dance. One would speak, another would pick

ATHANAS GA

The clincher—when DHL co-founder and judge Po Chung asked, "So, when can I invest?"



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Dressed for success

Short story

Vested interest

Flirty and feminine, this floral-print dress is a must-have for the summer season. Pair it with a cardigan and wedges for a casual look. Dress, P1,995, Mango

BE THAWTED and daring by toying on colored jeans. Red denim jeans, P499.75, ZTI

HOOKNOSIS just for facial effects, a skinny tie is a hip accessory to trade with a necklace. Black and gray checkered necktie, P249.75, Avenida Caruso

AN ECHO! chain helps you leave your wallet and keys always in check. Silver multilayered wallet chain, P199.75, S-Cubed

In the hood

Keep cool weather in check with a cool, black cropped hoodie

Black pre-knit legging fits snugly on waist/ankles. Black plaid pants, (Matching print available upon request)

ANTIDOT look never fails to add an edge. Green perforated leather biker belt, P149.75, M.I.C.

GRAPHIC tees are a good option to decorate your outfit instead of a necklace. Purple graphic tee, Wow (print available upon request)

Get a leg up

HIGH-tension flats bring an added punch. Fuchsia jelly flat shoes, P199.75, Aldo

R-EVOLVING bangles aren't your thing, try delightful rings for your pesky pointers. Silver plastic ring, P69.75, M.I.C.

EQUALLY stylish as a blazer, a bomber jacket is a great jacket alternative. Black cotton bomber jacket, P899.75, Bobby

Plaid to perfection

A staple for the urban set, camo turns an act cool with shades in all shapes and sizes

CLUTCH pro a chic choice over rugged biker boots. Red leatherette hotlist cuff, P149.75, Ocicat

STAY sleek and modern in slim fit shorts. Black cargo shorts, P499.75, Bobos

A KNITTED vest adds a fanciful, colorful touch. Multicolored knitted vest, P999.75, Mello

Ateneans win 'Best of the Best' at young . . .

From page D1

up and then they'd finish together. They walked across the stage and proved to have humor and were very much engaging. They were, apparently, the team to beat.

But, as usual, the Q&A made them break down. They exhausted so well that when something came up that wasn't in the script, they forgot their stride. They took too long to answer questions and they basically repeated their presentation without really answering them.

The bruised team was the team has to watch because one of the members seemed more like an instructor from the Home TV Shopping, network. He was full of gratuitous. He was a hams and he was good at it. He made the audience laugh and he got people's attention.

Unfortunately, their product was not well thought of and their business model wasn't treated out to production. One judge even taunted, "You have lots of imagination but I don't think you can make this real."

THIS is no dance team! Not. The judges of the #YSEA

Team Philippines was next, composed of Ateneans Karl Sanmiguan and Timothy Hontiveros. Dressed in snappy barong Ilonggo (once more!), they came on strong and impressive. Their presentation was very logical and feasible, so much so that the judges were hard-pressed to find questions for the team. Judge Pe Cheng teamed asked, "So, where can I invest?"

Next, Team Thailand had an interesting gimmick, but then didn't use it in the end. Their presentation began as a news report, but halfway through, the business model was unveiled. The Q&A showed they were too conservative and ignatlic would not make the whole process worthwhile to future investors.

The daytime Q&A for the Philippine team stretched for awhile. The Ateneo students were named "Best of the Best" and won a prize of HK$ 100,000.

Hontiveros said after words that the Philippines won because "it was a combination of a lot of things...one is penetrating into it that it was environment-friendly and three, they actually had a working model. They had the product with them."

For his part, Hardva said, "When Pe Cheng asked talves he could invest, that was when we knew we got it."

Mock presentations

In preparation for the competition, Hardva and Sanmiguan went through many mock presentations in front of their dean, Rudy Ang Tatlo went all the way to Hong Kong to cheer for his team), and a group of professors and a team from HSBC Philippines to make sure their presentation was as perfect as possible.

More than just a competition, the #YSEA was also a study tour. The week-long activity included company visits where the students (winning teams and second and third placers as well) toured various businesses and met with company executives. These gave them a valuable peek into the world of big business.

The students also visited Ocean Park and discovered how it continues to thrive despite the presence of Hong Kong Disneyland. They visited Cathay Pacific and met its CEO's assistant Ari Boyd. They got a first-hand look at the reality of the airline business and found out how it is coping with the financial crisis and mounting oil shocks. There were leadership workshops and lectures from esteemed businessmen on how to be good entrepreneurs. Pe Cheng himself gave a talk on his life as an entrepreneur.

At the end of the study tour, the 40-plus students from six nations across Asia had become friends. They had all added each other on Facebook and had started their own group page to easily catch up with each other. They had sightseen at Lan Kwai Wong, Hong Kong's nightlife district and bonded with each other.

They will no doubt treasure this experience not many students get to have.

BANGLADESH wins third prize.

TEAM Bahrawes' winning edge. Hardva gives the judges a insight of their product.

JILL HEART. Sanmiguan shows the Blue Eagle way of presenting.

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Life is (not so) Tweet

My funny one-liners are best when I can hear the laughter right after

By Wenggie Gallego

I'VE BEEN URGED OVER AND over again to start my own Twitter page by friends and colleagues. I'm fond of posting strange and absurd status updates on my Facebook page, and I've been known to be occasionally funny with my sarcastic or snarky one-liners.

But when I took a quick look at the Twitter pages of other people and of the status updates in my current list on Facebook, I realized one thing: I'm sorry, I guess I'm just not that into knowing what you had for breakfast and whether it was really yummy.

Twitter has allowed millions of people around the globe to put their byte-sized thoughts on the web. All of a sudden, it has become an age of needless self-promotion. The average Juan now enjoys a feeling of significance when his most mundane and banal activities find an audience on the web.

To make matters worse, these little 140 character musings on pretty much nothing important either/ones get replied to.

Twitter does have its uses, and I can see how it can become an effective tool for a global exchange of ideas. A recent Time Magazine article said a conference on education in the US was made public on Twitter, and people all over the world had a chance to offer their thoughts on the subject, making the symposium a more meaningful gathering and a true exchange of ideas.

Celebrities and artists also use Twitter to reinforce their connection with their fans. Also, the search function of the social networking application makes it easier to find ideas and links or other articles and websites related to whatever it is you are researching for. In fact, there are many great uses for Twitter indeed.

But if you ask me, for every one great reason, there are two dozen useless ones that just take up web storage in some server in the US. What kind of depth can you really touch with 140 characters? Not everyone is capable of coming up with a thought-provoking sound bite.

Mini-stalking

As more and more people get into Twitter, the more they seem bound to their friends, and in a frightening way, to celebrities and artists whom they follow in kind of promotion-a new level of stalking, and odds are our obsessive-compulsive need to reach out to these stars and feel closer to them.

But, in truth, they are giving you the same information they make available to everyone on the Net!

I kind of like the blank space, the things we don't really need to know about each other. It's called personal space, and Twitter destroys this wall by making insignificant things seem more significant than they really are. There is too much information now out there that I don't really want to know. That's why I'm muting off it.

And as we become more and more accustomed to reading 140-character thought crap (because, really, it's just like popping out the first thing that comes to mind), we start sacrificing our information to the same concise and terse way.

It's like how the younger generation can only take a 2-hour movie if it's filled with non-stop action, because they are so used to watching everything MTV-style. You get the whole story in 3 and a half minutes, the average length of a song. A 10-minute dialogue scene becomes dragging and boring.

Our attention spans are getting shorter and shorter and we want things smaller and smaller. It's the way of technology but it shouldn't be the way of information and certainly of personal relationships.

Old-Fashioned

I guess I'm old-fashioned, but I really prefer to talk. I miss the days of long conversations on the landline phone until your ears are burning from the pressure. I like discussing things at length and actually seeing the person I'm talking to.

Now, it seems, it's all short bursts of information. I guess I won't make for this digital age.

The Magic of Touch
SAMSUNG
3.0" WQVGA Touch Screen
TouchWiz UI
Widgets
3.2MP Camera
Smileshot
Full Internet Browser
Mobile Blogging
Samsung Star
Samsung Preston
with HSDPA 7.2Mbps
FUN Club
SAMSUNG
Samsung Experience Shops located at: 2/F Greenhill 1 • G/F Robinsons Ermita • 3/F Ayala Center, Cebu • Eastwood City, Libis • G/F Robinsons Galleria • G/F SM San Fernando, Pampanga • 2/F Digital Exchange Cloverleaf • G/F LinkedNaz Mall, Cagayan De Oro • G/F Cybercom SM Megamall • 1/F SM City Cebu • G/F Concentar, SM Mall of Asia • G/F Cybercom, SM Marikina • 2/F SM City Davao • G/F Cybercom SM City Manila • 2/F Southwing SM City Bacolod

The best Twitter applications

A round-up to help you filter the useful from the unnecessary

By Bianca Castanil

AUMET TEXEL I WASN'T SO HUNG UP on Twitter when I first gave it a go about half a year ago. My initial reaction was a unanimous one—"Yeah? How different can Twitter be from Facebook status messages?"

In any Twitter convert will tell you, Tweeting is very different.

I started Tweeting more actively when I downloaded a Twitter application to my laptop instead of merely sending messages from the web. All of a sudden, it was easier to send, read and sort through Tweets without the endless hassle of refreshing my browser window.

To me an old-school reference, it was like discovering mIRC for the first time after using browser-based chat websites for ages.

But no two Twitter applications are exactly alike. Readwriteweb.com reports that the Twitter Fan Wiki lists 209 (and counting!) Twitter applications to make Tweeting more fun, but there are definitely more than that if you comb the web carefully.

While the applications have different purposes, or use used to cater to a specific market (like Mac or Windows users), they're still a get-hacking room of applications I'm a single type person or eye.

How do you filter the useful from the unnecessary, the inspired from the insipid?

Super Trendspicks the best Twitter applications to run back for reading your Tweets.

MAC USERS like Twitterific's sleek design.

Twitterfox

A pop-up application that works with both Mac and Windows operating systems, Twitterfox has to be used with Firefox as an extension or add-on. To see its name: Explorer or Safari for you—it knows be Firefox.

It's a great idea if you want to be bombarded with pop-up Twitter messages while you're surfing the Internet (you can change the settings, though), but it can be limiting. Tweets come in so much everyday and dingy, but great if you only use Mac and Windows, preventing you from downloading other programs.

Score: 3/5

Tweetdeck

The application that converted many a cynic, Tweetdeck makes life simple for the busiest tweeple/peeps. Compatible with Mac OSX and Microsoft Windows (and convert this by manual installation to Linux), Tweetdeck's interface is simple, elegant and easy to use.

You can have several columns for easy viewing on the latest on your screen feed, replies and personal messages. You can also customize it to see: Out: Facebook status message updates (and sync updates if you please, for the truly busy), set groups, or view a tag cloud.

Best of all, you don't have to open an external site like TwitPic and TwitPic to chatter with addresses or upload photos. Simple, effective and fun—just remember to fix the settings so you're not forced to put up with the Twitter bird's annoying chirping every time you get an update.

Score: 5/5

TWEETDECK'S interface is easy to use.

Twitterrific

Sadly for Windows users, this easy-to-use application is devoted exclusively to Mac fanatics. But if you're using Apple gadgets such as the iPhone, you'll love this well-designed application that won the 2008 Apple Design Award for Best iPhone Social Networking Application.

It also offers an impressive number of keyboard shortcuts. But as majority of the world's users still use PCs, its limited reach disappoints.

Score: 3.5/5

Twhirl

The best application for you if you like things bright and cheery instead of sleek and sophisticated. We love it that Twhirl automatically shortens long URLs (we TinyURL) and sends photos to TwitPic. You can also use it to cross-post your other social networks.

However, it just doesn't have the complete zen-haven-heaven quality of TweetDeck—and guys may be put off by the brightness of the sets.

Score: 4/5

Twitteroo

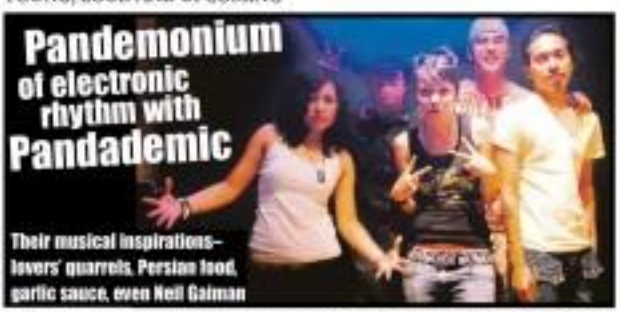
If Mac users have their own Twitter application, then why shouldn't the hard Windows fanatics have theirs?

An application that works with Windows XP or Vista, it basically does the same thing that Tweetdeck does, minus the fancy fudge. While goes to say there isn't much to be said about the Irish inventor of Twitteroo, find it does the job, so what's complaining?

Score: 3/5

YOUNG, LOUD AND UPCOMING

Pandemonium of electronic rhythm with Pandademic



Their musical inspirations—lovers' quarrels, Persian food, garlic sauce, even Neil Gaiman

By Jed-Angelo Q. Segovia

PANDEMIC IS A group formed in 2007 whose music is a laboratory of electronic dance-pop with punk permanadoria.

Mela and Zelle both do vocal and keyboard duties and swap instruments between certain songs. Cyto is guitarist and band "main man," he gathered all the members into the current roster.

Tito is the drummer, sporting a cap with the Hellboy logo, and Markus "Brutal" is the percussionist. "We like Brutal's enthusiasm," Zelle says quietly. They cracked up. "Yah, he's just shy."

They rehearse at Alter Light Studio, located in a dingy subterranean basement on the fourth floor of 2 Dimasalang.

Are you guys are really good friends?

Mela: Yep, we're all friends. Pati manager natoin, si Red (Palmer "Red" Lebat), was our friend, then he became a fan, and then manager. He's our "Panda pet".

Red: Lambit! Buhay, well, girl friend ko sinisi si Mel.

All: Uuuyy!

Red: At about yun nalaba.

Cyto: I'm a certified lawyer, I graduated from Ateneo law school.

Zelle: I'm also a lawyer, graduated from Ateneo. We're all lawyers here (laughs).

Mela: I graduated Comm UST in nursing. This is my sound adviser-slash-audiophile.

Zelle: I'm in BSAE, third year Psych. My dad's formerly from a jazz band, my mom's a dancer, and my brother plays in a jazz band, he punk. Ha-ha-ha.

Who are your influences, and how would you describe your sound?

Cyto: We all come in with multiple musical influences, and we all just throw together in to our sounds. We're electronic, punk, rock, metal, laboratory.

Mela: We don't have just one genre. (sorry description ng bandmate) sa Facebook di ka me gawa (laughs).

Zelle: We try not to be too mainstream; we want to be something different.

When I heard you guys jamming, the first band I thought of was The Ting Tings.

Mela: Actually! We used to cover the Ting Tings, back when they still weren't big. We were among the first to cover them. They just sounded so different, so when people heard us playing them, they asked, "Ano ba? Magic ba e?"

Zelle: I think the closest band we sound like is Garbet de Barbie.

Mela: [beaming] "Music is our bestfriend!"

I listened to you rehearsing. Were you really singing, "Sunok, sunok, sunod"?

[band laughs] Mel: "sup!

Is it about fixed partying?

Mela: (laughs) No, it isn't. It's remixed "Ah-Can't Help It."

Zelle: It was originally titled "Lover's Quarrel." Just it's loooh-ooo... [grins]

Mela: [sighs] Yeah, it's based on my own experience. Do you know how during an fall you feel so bad that you end up saying anything just to hurt the other person? The song is about that. You're filled with so much angst, you just end up... Imbes na [wearing up] vomiting whatever you think of saying.

Your lyrics are interesting lyrics. Who writes the lyrics to your songs?

Cyto: Mel and Zelle write the songs, we play the music. I was the tracks in my house—

Mela: —ang alam niyang gawin guitar at chuchay.

Cyto: —parang undas naman dyan (chuckles).

What events in the have to-upload your music?

Mela: Random suggestions. I have "sung sickness"—every time I'm inspired, I have to write a song. We have one recent that "Hallucine". It's based on someone we've unknown to do it. But I had a time touching licenses, and our receiver he or a teacher. Now this teacher had a boyfriend, but she still hooked up with the student. Hang amount ng license (sung student, grad, former) dla.

Zelle: I wrote a song about garlic once. I mind laughs) *Me kidding!* One time I was having Persian food with garlic sauce, and it was so good I had to write a song about it.

Mela: Lovers' quarrels, Persian food, even Neil Gaiman. Random inspirations!

How do you compare your band's emergence with electronic music's emergence in the Philippines?

Cyto: I think we're well-timed, meaning na having band ng ganyan isang sira much to genre, like Pedicab and Up Dharma Down.

Which direction do you see yourselves making your music?

Mela: We hope to be playing our music for a long, long time!

Zelle: We want to be as tight as Urbandub.

Cyto: Yeah! Urbandub. Major-

TWITTER isn't so far when you use a regular browser.

Life is (not so) Tweet

From page E1

It seems technology is hell-bent on keeping us in front of our computers and dealing with each other in virtual space. But, in truth, I think I'll remember more being with a person and saying nothing than what he or she had tweeted the day before.

Tweeting doesn't make us closer. Relationships are based on going through actual experiences with each other.

In fact, I've been blogging less and less now. I don't feel inclined to put up my thoughts and feelings there because I've begun to think that, again, it's just another self-centered—putting up tons of information that nobody really interested in.

Now I'm more inclined to drop my already insignificant Internet time and spend more time talking to people. Not many non-Tweeters are here when I can hear the laughter right after.

Post-summer tracks

Turn up the volume for five albums you should be listening to now

"STAY POSITIVE"

by The Hold Steady

It's getting tiring to explain to confederates on chat (through the Hold Steady sounds unabashedly like classic rock, it's classic rock of the poetic, hyper-content, story-song breed, not classic rock you can name like Foreigner while playing Rock Band.

But if there was any doubt as to whether these Springsteen-lifting vibes would hold up for yet another go-around, it was single-handedly destroyed by "Constructive Summer," an album opener about kids making the most of the season by climbing water towers and listening to the Clash. If this kind of thing were supposed to get old, it would have happened three decades ago.

KEY TRACK: "Constructive Summer"

"VISITER"

by The Dodos

The music begins modestly, with a twangy banjo and the steady thump of a kick drum, but eventually grows to one of the most visceral, blood-coursing albums of the year. "Visiter" is a testament to the physicality of music—the entire operation rests on the shoulders of a bare-stomping guitarist who doesn't use a pick and a tattooed drummer who fashioned tambourines into his shoes for an added layer of racket. Following skewed tribal patterns, the drums—they're big and loud—hit a jaw-rattling chord deep within, tapping into something instinctual. Against the echoes Meric Long's lived punk fingerpickin' and raw-boned voice make for some of the most wonderfully foreboding love songs we've ever heard.

KEY TRACK: "Fools the Sea Sent"

"RIP IT OFF"

by Yeasayer

Whereas punk was born of kids trying to make their limited musical interests, its vanguard now lies in kids with vision who encounter trying to sound as though they're limited. There's no Ant-Farm potential enough to name the jumbled stage-meeting of Times New Viking's first disc by Rhumba, where a plague of late, eerie and violence clouds every silver lining. But nobody "Rip It Off's" unintelligibility articulates the murky headspace of prolonged adolescence better than a few dozen phrases could. The epiphanies are introduced and the soundbites bedlinked, yet there's remorse behind every misstep. The storied case of Prime 6. Melody thankfully brought up to speed, once again.

KEY TRACK: "Rrrun-Run"

HOT EXACTLY (Full-band reunited

with the core of his life

KEY TRACK: "I Don't Want to Die In a Hospital"

"CONDOR OBERST"

by Conor Oberst

Conor Oberst probably isn't the first name that's going to come to mind when you think about who's who in the current gossip mann scene. Without any of the fanfare that comes along with the release of any new album nowadays, Oberst struck out on his own to record a solo album, and we don't know if it was a matter of lessened expectations or what, but it contained the best material he's written in about seven years. It's his most stripped-down effort yet, full of simple country-ish songs on guitar/ukulele and no bloated, overly ambitious arrangements—just a mildly restraining songwriter coming to grips with having figured out what he's going to do with the rest of his life.

"THE RHUMB LINE"

by We Are Wilco

In the tradition of all the song-laden, myth-numbered, life-affirming rarities that have come to define jacks-of-all-trades, We Are Wilco weave together instrumentally unhinged songs with lyrics that touch on the serious side of things. But because they spotlight their signature melodies above all else, the result evokes emotion without ever feeling superficial or deliberate. It's a feat that takes an added significance when the band lost their original drummer in a devastating accident while recording the album. "The Rhumb Line" is a powerful tribute—proof that music can speed the mend.

KEY TRACK: "Can You Feel It"

Graphics Design Aiden Joshua Cano

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

A gustatory journey at Manila Pavilion

DINING THERE UNCHECKED THERE, traveling may well be considered a luxury if you can't hop on the plane and fly to your dream destination, the next best thing to do is to let your palates do the globe-trotting for you! Enter the Manila Pavilion's newest right here in the Manila Pavilion Hotel.

Because eaters you feel like royalty with its sumptuous Mediterranean Buffet that features the rich and exotic flavors of a continent far away. Take this one-of-a-kind trip all Thursdays and Fridays of July for only P950 net per person.

Asian cuisine, on the other hand, has been known for its flavorful excess that speaks of a colorful history and has been perfected through time. Honey Garden offers one of the most famous Chinese delicacies that never fail to draw raves from those who visit: the Peking Duck.

Noodles of the soup variety have long been identified as another Chinese specialty. Head over to the Delicatessen and partake of their Noodle Buffet. Available Mondays to Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., allows yourself to be outpowered with this classic yet fulfilling comfort food for only P299 ++ per person.

Rooftop gives you that much anticipated respite with drink and snack options that will soothe your ruffled feathers. Jack Daniels is one of the names to behold when it comes to liquor. Reacquaint yourself with the liquor extravaganza with perennial favorite of this lifetimes. Tennessee subduing served straight or whipped up into a brilliant yet irresistible cocktail, with Southern Jack Daniels proves.

Why travel a thousand miles when the wonders of the world can be found under just one roof? Indeed, the Manila Pavilion Hotel is one destination you should not miss.

Special introduction to the Landmark Forum

SUITES ON JULY 14, 4 TO 7 PM, AT HOTEL Pantranco, Batangas City, this free introductory seminar will be held by Mr. Allan Pedemas, the pioneer who brought Landmark Education in the Philippines. His still provide accomodation of the Landmark Forum, what it is, how it works and how it could specifically apply to you and your organization. On this occasion, there will be no opportunity for you to register in the next Landmark Forum dates in Manila. For the July 29-08 Landmark forum, you can register by paying the full tuition fee of P15,000, while a minimum deposit of P5,000 can be made to register for the begin 4-9 Landmark Forum. Payments are accepted in cash, check or credit card. To confirm your attendance please call Mr. Pogs de Rosario at 897-7-329-2196 or Ms Meyan Mendoza at 897-7-821-8000.

Phillip's Sanctuary and Eco-recreation Park opens

THE RAINS MAY BE COMING, BUT IT'S STILL very enough for some outdoor fun at Phillip's Sanctuary. Come to Phillip's Sanctuary in Sitio Pahilongan, Antipolo City and check out the city's first eco-recreation park and the largest of its kind in the area. Phillip's Sanctuary features a challenge course with both low and high ropes course elements, including a zipline, a hanging by edge...and more. Aside from recreational biking initiatives, Phillip's Sanctuary is also fast becoming the hottest team-building venue and school field trip destinations in the region. Phillip's Sanctuary, located in Sitio Pahilongan, Antipolo, is easily accessible from Marcos Hiway via Cogeo. It is about a 45-minute drive from Cubao, QC. For more information about Phillip's Sanctuary, please call 757-4837 or 0908-887-4284 or visit the website at http://www.phillips-sanctuary.com.

The hotel for business or leisure travelers alike

HOTEL LA CORONA DE LIPA INVITES GUESTS TO FEEL THE COMFORT OF home while doing their usual everyday business. It is strategically situated across SM Lipa, a few minutes away from universities, and is very ideal for religious activities being near to two shrines Mt. Carmel Church and San Sebastian Cathedral. Hotel La Corona De Lipa offers the best accommodation and services for business or leisure travelers. You can even spend a relaxing night and experience the "La Corona service" for only P999/night that includes standard room and a sumptuous breakfast for two. For further inquiries and reservations, please call Hotel La Corona Del Lipa at (043)300-2510, (043) 756-1233 or e-mail reservations@hotellacorona.com. For online reservations you may visit their website www.hotellacoronalipa.com.

Gambrinus Bar's July sizzlers

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA'S GAMBRINUS BAR SIZZLES WITH GREAT entertainment and tempting drink and food selections for the month of July. From 5 p.m. onwards live dance numbers complemented with the cuisine's selection of finger delicacies are on the menu. Gambrinus Bar is located at the Mezzanine. Lovers of good wine should not miss out on the wine flights and tapas starting 5 p.m. and onwards. Wine flights are 3 tasting portions of carefully selected wines for the price of one. An night desserts on the city. Sandalwood Bar entertainers starting 8 p.m. with mouthfilling performances by some of the country's emerging musical talents. As part of the hotel's 30th anniversary celebration, patrons will have a chance to win trips to dream destinations. Every P4,000 in a single receipt is redeemable for 1 raffle ticket. Patrons may participate until April 30, 2003. For reservations on Gambrinus Bar and other hotel promotions, call 730-1000.

Where to stay when heading north

THE LA MAJA RIZA HOTEL AND RESTAURANT VILLA SIULIT SUR HOTEL situated along the National Highway, halfway between Manila and Baguio, along the commercial and business centers of Tarlac City. The hotel offers a choice of 48 well-equipped guestrooms with complete amenities from complementary Continental-style breakfast, cable TV, air conditioning, combined solar heating system for hot water usage, telephone with NO-DIAL free WIFI zone, 24 hours standby generator and a spacious and secured parking lots. For recreation, guests can enjoy free use of the swimming pool. They also offer function and meeting rooms ideal for seminars, cocktails, parties, weddings and other gatherings. Café Maja Riza, their all -day dine dining restaurant, is ready to serve luscious spreads of Asian, Filipino and Continental dishes whose sauces and fine dining is perfect for guests and for those who simply want to lay back and relax.

CENTURY PARK HONORS 2002 TOP ACCOUNT CLIENTS OF THE HOTEL

CENTURY PARK HOTEL RECENTLY BROUGHT TOGETHER THE HOTEL'S top producing clients of the year 2002 to attend a lunch party as a gesture of appreciation for their support. With the Japanese theme entitled "Hideout Japan", guests were served Japanese food, and entertained with Japanese songs and dances by the hotel's staff and marketing team. Shown (from left) are CPH director of sales Jesus Rivera, corporate account manager Rhea Chua awarding the plaque to IBM Philippines Business Process Solutions Philippines Executive Director Fernando Villanueva, and Sir Yukihiro training manager Ronald Valenzuela, recipients for the top corporate customer in the category. They are accompanied by CPH officers namely: general manager Philippe Sandhendrail, senior sales account manager Florida de Leon, and sales manager Jasmine Rodelo.

Bring every member of the family home at Somerset Olympia Makati

THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU to leave your furry companions behind whether you are traveling on business, project assignment, relocation or a much needed leisure trip. Somerset Olympia Makati is the ideal destination for you and your family - cuddly pets included.

A mere three years from major corporations and shopping centers, Somerset Olympia presents balanced living with its proximity to Ayala Avenue, Glorietta Malls, Greenbelt Malls and an array of leisure venues.

Its picturesque serviced residences range from studios, one and two-bedroom apartments of warm and cozy interiors promoting comfortable living spaces, an entertainment centre and high-speed broadband Internet access.

At Somerset Olympia, you may entertain guests in the comforts of your very own living room or whip up home-cooked meals from your very own kitchen to serve to family and friends. For any endeavour: work, apartments, the leisure home offer in your residence enables you to attend to work requirements and keeps you

connected anywhere in the world. And for animal lovers, the pet-friendly tower offers the perfect residence so you can bring every member for the family home to Somerset Olympia.

Microtel

MOVIES, MUSIC AND MORE

24/7 SUPER RADAR

By Janine Cuenca-Davis and Giancarlo Espinosa

EXPLORE THE FOUR corners of the world without going through pesky Immigration lines and inconvenient airport security checks. The events this week have enough fusion in them to give you a tour of different cultures without leaving the comforts of the city.

Japanese film festival

The best things to life are still free. You have until the weekend to watch Japanese films at no cost at **Ever Bel Aire**, courtesy of the Japan Foundation. Tonight's offering is **Kamikaze Girls**, directed by Tetsuya Nakashima and starring **Anri Sugihara**. Tomorrow, it's **Hula Girls**, directed by Lee Sang-il and starring **Yuko Takeuchi**. Sunday, it's **Waterboys**, directed by Shinobu Yaguchi and starring **Kankuro Kudo**. Monday, it's **Linda Linda Linda**, directed by Nobuhiro Yamashita and starring **Bae Doona**. Tuesday, it's **Swing Girls**, directed by Shinobu Yaguchi and starring **Juri Ueno**. Wednesday, it's **Waterboys**, directed by Shinobu Yaguchi and starring **Kankuro Kudo**. Thursday, it's **Hula Girls**, directed by Lee Sang-il and starring **Yuko Takeuchi**. Friday, it's **Kamikaze Girls**, directed by Tetsuya Nakashima and starring **Anri Sugihara**. Saturday, it's **Swing Girls**, directed by Shinobu Yaguchi and starring **Juri Ueno

GARFIELD

JL LIPIN

FUSAO BARDY

DICK TRACY

LOVEKNOTS

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

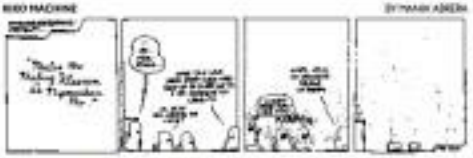
BABY BLUES

TULDOK

BEH

ATOMIC AND WEEGY

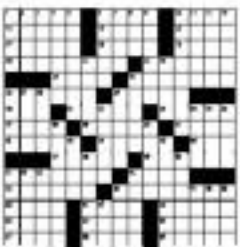
REED MACHINE



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DIANE

CROSSWORDS PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

			4			5		
	6			8				
9	7			6				2
8						4	2	
			5					
	3	2						9
2			3			8	4	
			2			1		
		1			9			

Difficulty Level: ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.nasdoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	1	9	7	2	4	8	6	5
2	8	6	5	3	1	4	7	9
4	7	5	8	9	6	3	2	1
1	2	3	9	4	7	6	5	8
5	6	7	3	1	8	2	9	4
9	4	8	2	6	5	1	3	7
7	3	1	4	5	2	9	8	6
8	9	4	6	7	3	5	1	2
6	5	2	1	8	9	7	4	3

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Miley Cyrus, in her father's eyes /F6

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Nikki P. Rubio

SATURDAY Special

Cameron Diaz tackles most challenging role to date

LOS ANGELES—CAMERON Diaz has never been a tease, but in her new movie, "My Sister's Keeper," she faces a choice no mother would want, which is one reason she seems known mostly for comedic skill stepped into serious drama.

In the movie, Diaz portrays a mom whose daughter suffers from leukemia. So, she gives birth to a genetically engineered second daughter in order to take umbilical cord blood from the younger sibling and give it to the sick one.

But, family relationships are upended when, as girls, the little sister sues her parents to block them from making her give a kidney to her dying sister. Diaz's character, a former lawyer named Sara, fights her 11-year-old daughter's attempt at "medical emancipation."

Role

The role is far from Diaz's parts in feel-good movies, such as the romantic comedy "There's Something About Mary" the action-packed "Charlie's Angels," or reviving the role of Princess Fiona in the "Shrek" animated movies.

Yet, Diaz, 36, said she doesn't see herself as one kind of actress or another, and she looks to her own youth in the working class neighborhoods of Long Beach, California, for lessons to have to act life size get money. "I don't feel I've ever played the same person twice. Even though I might have done a couple of comedies or romantic comedies, all the characters are very different," she shared.

Rob Cannavino, one of the groundbreaking independent filmmaker, John Cassavetes, directed "My Sister's Keeper" and said he always saw Diaz for more than her bubbly onscreen personality to fully Hollywood roles. "She is a wonderful actress and, over the next few years, you're going to see that she's going to be home one to be one of the finest actors of our generation," he declared.

Donor

Abigail Breslin, 13, plays the sympathetic sister, Anna, who is forced to serve as a donor to the older Kate, played by Sofia Vassilieva, 16, who stars on TV's "Medium."

A hotshot attorney (Alec Baldwin) takes Anna's legal case, and forces all against Anna in court. As Kate's health spirals downward, the tension in her family becomes increasingly strained.

Cannavino, director of the 2004 romantic drama, "The Notebook," has a personal connection to the story because his own daughter has lived with a congenital heart defect since birth. "To work with somebody who was so familiar with this situation made it easy for me to trust him," Diaz said about the director.

Diaz said that while it may seem as some of her fans that she leads a soft life in Hollywood, growing up in Long Beach gave her "street smarts." "The place where I came from was very urban. There were a lot of lessons to be learned," she recalled. "I didn't grow up in a protective, sheltered life by any means."

But, she feels lucky to have been raised in a working-class community by strong, persistent—her father died unexpectedly while she was making this movie—because she learned "a lot of things that are very valuable in my life now."

Experience

That experience appears to be paying off in "My Sister's Keeper," because critics are now weighing in, and most of them are giving Diaz and her latest movie the thumbs up.

"Never known for her comedic roles, Diaz turns in an intense, utterly compelling performance, immersing herself completely—wearing ordinary clothes and zero makeup—in the tough dramatic role of the matriarch," critic Emanuel Levy wrote in his online review.

Reuters

Best performers of all time precede Michael Jackson's reign

By Nestor U. Torre

AT MICHAEL JACKSON'S EMOTIONAL tribute last week, famous record producer, Berry Gordy, got a big ovation when/where he movingly intoned that "King of Pop" didn't adequately describe Michael—"He is simply the best entertainer who ever lived."

Quite a number of fans would agree, especially when they factor in Jackson's decades-long stellar career, the major inroads he made not just of himself, but also for other black and minority entertainers, his humanitarian initiatives, his singing and dancing prodigy and relatively-... etc.

Fulsome praise

However, others believe that Gordy went overboard in his fulsome praise for Jackson, pointing out that other entertainment icons shouldn't be dismissed as so much chopped liver, just so Michael can be given the biggest hosa.

They applaud and honor Jackson, but don't believe that his contributions to the entertainment world are greater than the most achievements of the truly exceptional likes of Charlie Chaplin, Sammy Davis Jr., Gene Kelly, Barbra Streisand... etc.

Chaplin wasn't just the world's finest comedian, he also wrote, directed, produced and composed music for his movies, many of which are still regarded as seminal classics. In addition, his early training as a gymnast made him an exceptional dancer and mime, a performing artist who could "speak" volumes without actually saying a single word.

Another unforgettable performer was Sammy Davis Jr. Even Michael himself mentioned the many and intricately talented singer-dancer, who commended audiences with the immensity of his gift as a performer. And, like Michael, Davis also opened doors for minority artists. He even shocked a lot of people when he became one of the first black stars to marry a Caucasian luminary (May Britt).

Chance

Filipinos were given a chance to appreciate Davis' talent when he performed here in the '80s. He was simply Amazing as he entertained his SRO audience practically all by himself... for more than two hours!

Gene Kelly (and, Gene Kelly was acclaimed for decades as one of the film world's top dance choreographers. The modern movie musical owes a lot to this exceptional trio of such memorable musical classics as "On the Town" (which he collaborated with Stanley Donen), "Singin' in the Rain" (also, Donen) and "An American in Paris."

Some movie-musical buffs think that Fred Astaire is the better dancer, but Kelly's creative contributions to the filmmaking process as choreographer and collaborator were definitely unmatchable.

The same multiplicity of talents decidedly adds to Barbra Streisand's iconic stature in the fields of theater, TV, film, recording and the concert stage. She began her career in a musical theater way, but after the announced her talent almost across-the-board, threatened to challenge major accomplishments in many other fields. She even excelled at film directing with "Yentl" (1983), a film that struck deep at her Jewish roots.

Among the film world's theater greats, movie buffs idolized Laurence Olivier, Marlon Brando, Robert de Niro, Gena Garbo, Vivien Leigh, Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino, Meryl Streep and other iconic performers, whose insightful and powerful portrayals have enriched popular culture in truly-significant ways.

Surely, they too deserve to be honored in this year's list of the best and most iconic performers of all time—and Michael Jackson would consider himself privileged and proud to be included in their august company.

CHAPLIN. He could "speak" volumes without actually saying a single word.

STREISAND. Iconic stature in the fields of theater, TV, film, recording and the concert stage.

Romance rocks wizard world in latest 'Potter' feature

RADCLIFFE. Love blossoms for the teenage wizard in "Half-Blood Prince."

LONDON—ROMANTIC COMEDY storms the wizarding world in "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," the sixth installment in the hit movie franchise, in which hormones, as well as lenses, are on the boil at Hogwarts school. And, with filming on the final two pictures due to ramp up in 2010, the franchise's stars are finally looking ahead to life after "Potter."

"It was nice to know that this film is more of a romantic comedy than ever before, and that we would have a chance to focus more on that side of things," shared Emma Watson, who plays the feisty bookworm, Hermione.

Co-star Rupert Grint is no stranger to romance and antics, and she really is very vulnerable to this film," the 19-year-old veteran told reporters. "She really does get her heart broken by Ron and Lavender."

Hormones

Director David Yates, who also takes the helm for movie, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," added: "The cast is getting older now, and the hormones are starting to fly, for me, it marks a real transition point because our cast is children and as adults."

In "Half-Blood Prince," Hogwarts is increasingly vulnerable to attack from Lord Voldemort, Potter's nemesis. Hogwarts headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, plans more trust in his star pupil, Potter, determined to prepare him for his inevitable showdown with Voldemort. Meanwhile, love blossoms, with Harry drawn to Ginny and Ron attracting the attention of Lavender Brown, as a heartbroken Hermione looks on jealously.

"We're working at the moment on Deathly Hallows," and we're all aware that this great juggernaut is reaching the end of its journey," reckoned Yates, who's also directing both installments of "Deathly Hallows." Reuters

Saigon's sights and sounds on my mind

By Rito P. Asilo

MY TRIP TO SAIGON LAST WEEK with my brother, Divino, made me realize I knew little about the socioeconomic nation on the Indochina peninsula. With a population of approximately 86 million, it is the 13th most populous country in the world. (Interestingly, the Philippines is in 12th place, with 91 million.)

Of course, we flew in its largest city, Saigon aka Ho Chi Minh, bowing (but in war-savaged people had morphed the name of "Miss Saigon," the popular stage musical that paved the way for many Filipino performers in the world of musical theater. But, we soon discovered that there was more in Saigon, Hanoi, Danang and Tay Ninh than tragic heroines and those omnipresent cyclos and motorbikes.

We crawled inside the Viet Cong's *de facto* underground tunnels, walked alongside affable elephants at the 40-hectare Dam Sen Park, fought back tears at the War Remnants Museum, and witnessed the colorful Tay Ninh ritual of the syncretic, monotheistic religion, Cao Dai, whose saints include Chinese revolutionary Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Vietnamese poet Nguyen Binh Khiem, and—would you believe?—French novelist Victor Hugo ("Les Miserables")!

Top picks

The trip also boosted our interest in Vietnam meals and cuisine, as well as those of its Southeast Asian neighbors in Indochina: Laos, Cambodia and Burma. We searched local tourism and purchased DVDs of the region's most important films. Our top picks:

Laos' "Good Morning, Luang Prabang" is a light romantic drama: a photographer (played by Thai superstar, Ananda Everingham), an Australian-Laotian-Thai muslim, who wounded his emotions with the immaturity of his gift as a performer. And, like Michael, Davis also opened doors for minority artists. He even shocked a lot of people when he became one of the first black stars to marry a Caucasian luminary (May Britt).

EVERINGHAM (RIGHT). Plays a photographer who falls for his Laotian tour guide in "Good Morning, Luang Prabang."

"THE WHITE SILK DRESS" (LEFT). Follows the love story of a twin-block and a beautiful servant.

Well-chosen lineup boosts 'Eiga Sai'

By Nestor Torre

JAPANESE CINEMA IS SO RICH and interesting in every judging by the superb selection of films in this year's "Eiga Sai." From a quiet film based on a meditation Haruki Murakami short story to a turbo-charged, hyperactive romantic adventure, those in "Eiga Sai '09" will give you a good idea of how wide-ranging contemporary Japanese cinema is.

Ticket

For movie buffs, this film festival is usually one of the year's highlights. There are only eight movies showcased this year, but each one has been well-chosen, and you won't regret standing in line for your ticket, which, by the way, is free.

If you're in the mood for something lyrical and contemplative, don't miss Jun Ichikawa's "Tony Takitani" (2004). Based on a short story by Haruki Murakami, the film is an faithful an adaptation as any Murakami fan could wish for. Delicate and detailed with cinematic precision, it chronicles the lonely life of the titular character (played by Issey Ogata) who escapes from the sage of loneliness when he meets and marries a beautiful woman (Rie Miyazawa), only to descend back into it again.

A full appreciation of "Tony Takitani" requires one to surrender to the film's gentle, almost dreamlike rhythm. This is a movie of nuance and sobriety, where fine emotions hollow the visceral feeling of isolation at its core. That the filmmaker uses style to transform what Murakami wrote without losing any of its most quintessential is a testament to his skill.

"TONY TAKITANI": Gentle, almost dreamlike rhythm

Context

An almost shocking contrast to the different shades of neutral in "Tony Takitani" is the wild setting of "Hotel Grand." Firmly placed at the other end of the spectrum in terms of color, you can't compare, the film is an emotionally grotesque, often literally and always riveting satire that looks and sounds like the frenetic and unsubdued hallucinations of a manga artist.

Writers and director Kenji Sawada based on Seishi Hotoki's manga, the sixteen-minute story is less follows the misadventures of a 20-year-old as yet unpublished manga artist, his childhood sweetheart, her sister, an old man stuck in a rebirth, and a host of other characters. The hero's main supervisor sets his hair, breaks his sweetheart's love and get published, but 10 minutes into the movie, the hilarity comes knocking, guns start blazing, people die and come back to life, and things go completely bonkers. But that you're not threatened about how completely crazy it can get—the storyline sequences about is a real doozy.

"Eiga Sai '09" runs until tomorrow at Shangri-La.

CORY'S PRAYER WARRIOR: Regal Films' Mother Lily Monteverde prays before the image of the Blessed Mother during a briefing time for Sisters Production Corazon Aquino in Greenbelt, Makati. PHOTO BY JOJO FABIAN

Peaceful exit

LOTUS POND. E. Valencia and S. Ilanvaré

MAGIC: Known for her meaningful, nationalistic songs.

SUSAN HERNANdez-Ellagan passed away recently after suffering from cancer. She was the longtime host of "Concert at the Park" and, as a singer, was known for her meaningful, nationalistic songs. Although computer in her last encounter, her family and friends nevertheless spoke to her about their personal encounter, because they knew she could hear them.

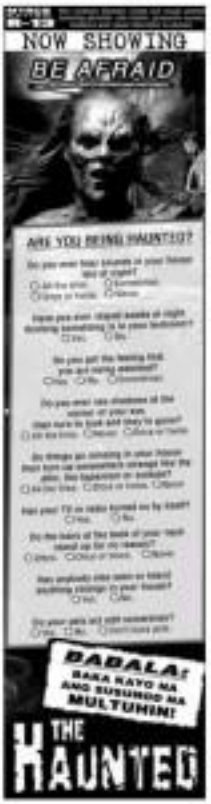
Musical skills

Susan's father, who was at her bedside, bravely said to her, "Go peacefully. Your heavenly Father awaits you. You can continue using your musical skills singing praise to Him in the celestial realm. Thank you for your love."

We also took the opportunity to relate per letter for us, "Thank you for your friendship. Don't be afraid to go through death's door. Let go. Take shelter from the Supreme Person. He will take good care of you because He loves you very much. Your friends, We will always pray for you when ever you'll be. Goodbye, Susan."

Shortly thereafter, Susan left peacefully and happily. How do we know that? At one point, someone asked, "Susan, are you happy?" Even though she was in a coma, Susan suddenly lifted her arms, which surprised and made everyone clap.

Truly, people who live with a noble purpose and work hand in hand to serve a higher cause are always blessed with a peaceful and happy exit.



UP's Listening Center vividly remembered

By Bebs Carvajales

DECADES AGO, A STUDENT-RUN LISTENING CENTER in the University of the Philippines library. It was meant to expose students to the best in literature, music and theater via recordings. And were the only way to document live performances then.

After a slow start, students flocked to the center to listen to classical music played by world-renowned orchestras under the baton of famous conductors. Or opera sung by Caruso, Pons, Bjoerling and Melchior. Recordings of Shakespearean and other well-known plays were regularly played, so we soon became familiar with the voices and styles of Olivier, Redgrave, Richardson.

Meeting place

We heard Agnes Moreland's live performance in "Every Young Summer," as well as Judith Anderson's unforgettable portrayal as "Medea." There were also recordings of poets like Dylan Thomas reading their creations. I sometimes missed classes to finish a play or an opera. So did other aficionados of good music and literature.

Poet Virginia Moreno was in charge of the center. She was before cassettes, CDs, DVDs, iPods and MP4s were created.

Imagination

Because it was mostly aural, so you had to use your ears when the music and effects infested. You weren't just a passive listener, you were "involved" in the experience, because you were creating images with your imaginations.

After a while, the Listening Center group became more kind of gang—we knew each other well. The center's officemates included the likes of Jessa Zaragoza, Peter Ledesma, Nanchita Rosca, Manuel Bernal, Lino Brocka, Jerome Gamboa, Pinky Bigua, and Bobbie Malay.

Dans . . .

From page 11

Exciting new trio revisits NVC's 'The Vagina Monologues'

After its much talked about 10th anniversary offering, "The Male Voice," the Here Point Company, in cooperation with Peterson Inc. (the Philippines' foremost arts and theater club), proudly presents its newest production, Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," with a special one-night-only performance on July 21 at the Cadet Chamber Theater, AFPC Plaza, Makati at 7:30 p.m.

Directed by NVC associate artistic director Bibi Avila, with light design and technical direction by Martin Farrow, the formidable and exciting new batch of actresses who will breathe life into Ensler's much-loved monologues are Joan Henares, Lily Chi and Mary Stevenson.

The show will raise funds for Womanlight, various projects to involve women in issues affecting the countries leaders. NVC artistic director is Monique Wilson and executive producer is Rosario Rivera. Call 896-1171.

HENARES, HERNANDEZ AND CHU: Exploring new incarnation of popular play

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GALLERIA

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 THE HAUNTED
5 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
6 ICE AGE 3: (DIGITAL 3D)
7 SENTE/PTK SULAS
8 Underdog: DOGE
9 VILLA ESTRELLA
10 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

ERMITA

1 THE HAUNTED
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
5 SENTE
6 VILLA ESTRELLA
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

METRO EAST

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 THE HAUNTED
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
8 SENTE

NOVALICHES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE

PIONEER

1 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 THE HAUNTED

STA. ROSA

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

LIPA

1 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

DASMARIÑAS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 IP MAN
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

IMUS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

STARMILLS

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 THE COFFIN
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
6 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE

ANGELES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

TACLOBAN

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 DRAG ME TO HELL
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

BACOLOD

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 REVOLUTIONARY ROAD
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 FROM WITHIN
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 THE PERFUME

ILOILO

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 ECHELON CONSPIRACY
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

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OPENS on JULY 16 at MOVIEWORLD

Challenging roles assigned to new lead players

REYES. Gets the big build-up.

By Nestor U. Torre

ABS-CBN IS GIVING ITS NEW leading lady, Marlene Reyes, the big build-up by way of her "introducing" roles: As the female lead of the new limited series on Sundays, "Gamot Kita Rason ba," and in some telecasts of the hit "inspirational" teleserye, "May Bukas Pa."

Potential

The fact that ABS-CBN is investing so much in its new leading lady despite the "controversies" in which she's been involved speaks volumes about the potential that her mother studio sees in her. If she's worth "defending" in this area, she must really have "something," right?

For proof positive, let's look in to her current drama, "Gamot Kita Karaokal," which had its first telecast last Sunday. In the limited action, Marlene plays an otherwise strong-willed young lady who, much against her better instincts, falls for a young nurse (Sid Lucero) who turns out to be married (to Isabel Granada).

At first, Marlene successfully wards off his determined advances, but he eventually breaks down her resolve and she agrees to "share" him with his similarly hapless wife. At the end of last Sunday's telecast, the conflicted leading lady was still unhappy as all heck, even as the aggrieved wife's suspicions increased—the latter in what viewers' curiosity about the ever-brewing complication in the dysfunctional romance's continuing "chapter."

Good news

So, how does Marlene fare in her first lead portrayal? The good news is that ABS-CBN's faith in her has been justified by her believable and empathetic portrayal. She's a no-frills actress who's able to draw viewers into her character's heart of hearts without having to cry herself a river of showy emotions.

On the debit side, her costar-ped of the classic young woman who has a passionate affair with a married man looks passive. We don't mean to say that she has to beat up the small screen with excessive emotion, but she still needs to live up to the fact that the liaison is an affair, not a light flirtation, and that her character's feelings are turned on by her macho lover's seductive charms.

Costar Sid Lucero has no problem bowling up the viewers with his sensitive looks and forthright manner. But, he has a hard time making his character sympathetic.

At first, he tries to do this by explaining to his fiancé how that his ardor for his wife has cooled because she's too demanding and expects him to be more successful than he is.

After a while, however, his constant explanations come off as more whiny and unconvincing, and it becomes clear to viewers that he's just the sort of man who wants to have it all, one matter who gets hurt.

Responsibility

He says he loves his wife and son, but his through his meth is invalidating opposite responsibility in illness. As for his mistress, he says her life just because he "loves" her.

Granted, it isn't easy to make a bad-to-the-bone affair less than despicable, but Lucero's character appears to have been conceptualized as a complex one, with both good and bad impulses clashing within him. Lucero's portrayal has yet to really this conflict to a substantial degree, so he's got to work much harder if he wants to triumph over the role's difficult challenge.

NOW SHOWING

Indies raise daunting questions

By Rito P. Asilo

CALZADO. Moving performance.

THE LOCAL INDIE ON VIEW this week raise daunting questions as they tackle substantial themes—with varying degrees of success: Mel Chionglo's "Bonsai" weaves disparate stories that collectively tackle extrajudicial killings, while GI Bonoy, "Pink Rising," examines the dysmorphic luck and circumstances.

In "Bonsai," Richard Gomez plays Ramon, the gun-toting henchman of Mayor Sarmenzo (Emilio Garcia) whose job is to stop hard-hitting radio commentator Amie Carmona (Jaqueline Jurado), from exposing one of the corrupt politician's shady deals. Unfortunately Ramon's focus isn't on the complex job at hand—he suspects that his wife, Dina (Ces Calzado), is having an affair with another man.

Student activist

Meanwhile, things are also hot on the heels of student activist, Mervin (Aldred Gatchalian). At the same time, these characters' paths cross and entangle.

As a filmmaker, Chionglo obviously knows how to tell a story with style and intelligence. His movie, in fact, is the most thematically substantial in the "Sine Direk" lineup (although Joey Reyes's "Ded Na Si Lolo" is the most crowd-pleasing).

The performances are uneven, but Chionglo's stances notable performances from the dependable Gomez and Calzado, who turns in a moving yet-typical despite her underwritten character.

Unfortunately, the production's dispirate stories don't really come together, and its intersecting storylines merely add clutter to the narrative's lackluster feel and style—and it doesn't help that the movie suddenly ends in a convenient anticlimax.

In "Pink Rising," the cocoa bich of struggling actress-cum-wannabe, Angela (Maria Al-

Miley Cyrus, in her father's eyes

LOS ANGELES—All 5 feet 10 inches (fully flat) Tyrus continues to have his own successful career as a singer and actor, he doesn't mind it when he is now sometimes referred to as the dad of Miley Cyrus.

At red carpet events, Billy Ray and Miley join together and then he gracefully steps aside to let photographers take solo shots of his daughter. In this interview he didn't mind at all answering questions mostly about Miley. In fact, he sounded proud and inspired just talking—and as one joke, cringing—about his 16-year-old's emerging career. They both appear in the film version of their hit TV series, "Hannah Montana." Excerpts:

Where did you realize that Miley was going to be an entertainer like you? How old were she?

Cait Perkins, who wrote "Miss Jones Blues," and I were singing "Amazing Grace" at a benefit gig—we were freezing our butts off—and I looked over and Miley was standing there singing. She hopped on me and said she was glad that I could make it to the party. I felt I was on top of the world.

Gift

The second year when I went about Tita Cory after she received the Times International award in Hong Kong. She thanked me for the article and photos that came out in this paper, then sent me a gift that same afternoon. It was one of her paintings...a flower garden that was made into tapestry!

Covering Tita Cory and her quests for democracy for so many years has made me patriotic. The last time I saw her was at the garment of the musical, "Cory!" Even then, she looked regal, calm and exuberant.

Last Thursday, I attended the **healing prayers for her at the St. Jude Catholic Church** in Times Street, Quezon City. There was a picture of her in a pink, low blouse at the altar. It, for once, was unfolded with hope—and freedom. Tita Cory, you have made me proud of being a Filipino...in thoughts, words and deeds. I love you—and I'm so proud to have covered you throughout the past.

Email: mandysusano@yahoo.com

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rhyme & Syntax

Noel C. Vasquez

CYRUS: Composed a song for his celebrity daughter (inset).

ALEXIS ROMAN

Lyrics

I wrote it when she and her mother left Memphis for California. I knew something big was going to happen. I sang on guitar, I picked it up and started singing—the lyrics just came (he sang): "She's gotta do what she's gotta do/And I've gotta like it or not/She's got dreams reaching for the stars/And she needs to go/So I'm a play/Whatever they say/Looks like she's all ready to leave/Nothing left to push/don't recognize her face in that one/Does it matter if she's about to/Long/God, I guess he's wrong."

"She's on the movin' line of the race of her life/As ready as she's ever been/Got the hunger and the stars in her eyes/She gotta be here or wrong/She's wayfin' on my blessings/Before she has chances upon round/Her baby get ready, get set, don't go."

Now that there are boys in Miley's life, how strict are you with her? Do you have a shotgun ready, ner to speak?

Luckily, I left all my guns in Tennessee (laughter). That was a joke. See, that's why I didn't go to it comedy. I just stand by and watch. If it seems danger, I step in. She's still a normal child but definitely leaning toward becoming an adult. She has matured very re- spect as a human being. She has a fair amount of common sense, probably a lot more than what I was blessed with. For the most part, she makes good choices.

Email comments, 1000Signatures, and mail to blog, "The Mystic Square," or http://blogs.inquirer.net/mysticsquare.

Covering *Tita* Cory

AFTER PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL, Eggie Apostol looked me to cover the **soldier after the assassination** of Benigno Aquino in the early '80s. Pretty soon, I was taking pictures of Tita Cory in the rallies.

My camera was witness to Tita Cory's transformation from a naive street parliamentarian to President of the Republic of the Philippines. I was also there when she was honored by Times International in Hong Kong, together with Mr. Aparicio and Lucy Bermudez-Magsaysay. In that particular event, Tita Cory was without a doubt the star of the night.

My "highlights" with Tita Cory were many, but two stands in- credible to my mind: The first time was when she was already President, when she hosted a Christmas party in Malacañang. I was with Tito Eggie and Lucy Magsaysay. As I crossed the aerial hall, I saw her walking toward me. I looked back, but there was no one behind me. Then, she hugged me and told me she was glad that I could make it to the party. I felt I was on top of the world!

Gift

The second was when I wrote about Tita Cory after she received the Times International award in Hong Kong. She thanked me for the article and photos that came out in this paper, then sent me a gift

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

CORY, with her daughters.

Divine desserts, sumptuous steaks

RECENTLY, LUNCH AT GUY'S house consisted of a simple roast Prime fillet as main course, with garlic pasta and Kalguimen Japanese style on the side. Because the meal was great and filling, I thought of skipping dessert. That plan changed, however, as soon as I took my first bite of the simple-looking chocolate cake that Charley brought.

Superior quality

"Oh my gosh!" were the only words I could utter after tasting the cake. Yes, it's a self-confessed chocoholic. But, I always try to stay healthy—so, if I see something that's not too healthy, I will only do so if it's of superior quality.

The cake I ate at Guy's place had the characteristics of a perfect chocolate cake. It was dark, moist, not too sweet—and super delicious!

The metropolis has a few other chocolate cakes with superb textures—like Ginny de Guzman's Truffle cake (at Sugarhouse) and Sylvia Lim's chocolate volcano. Dare I say, I dropped by Divine Dessert' cooler along Kalayaan and picked up a smaller version of another best-seller, the Chocolate Fudge. I planned to take just one bite to satisfy my craving—but soon the whole treat (it's that good).

I was told their blueberry cheesecake and rum cake are also best-sellers, but the double Fudge and Blackout cake are to die for.

Divine Dessert's is on Kalayaan st., Cubao. Coming from Edsa, pass along the Arbor Place area, whereupon you'll see it by- arriba Village. Dessert's Bakeshop and Ralph's wine store. Divine Dessert's will be on your right.

Heavenly. I also went to a restaurant to hang out with a good friend, who insisted that I try his new steak, cooked medium, which came with mashed potato and some horseradish on the side. I had it with a glass of red wine. It was perfectly cooked and super delicious! The glass of cabernet and the potato gilled eh, eye steak were a perfect combination. Try this checkered delicacy paired w Kaese sourcream behind Mendo's steakhouse on Tomas Morato ave., Quezon City. Call 373-4783.

Discoveries

I love dining and hearing about food discoveries and experiences from fellow foodies. So soon as the topic of food comes up, a new acquaintance suddenly feels like an old friend. Happy eating!

Divine Dessert's is located at 148 STC Center, Kalayaan. Call 9121-8875 or 426-3085.

E-mail: cutiejones@yahoo.c

'Iron Chef America' telecasts new episodes

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR WEEKS NOW, OUR STILL **viewing family has been in a blur** fetish, because one of our favorite shows, "Iron Chef" (reruns), has been on replay mode. It all started when the exciting cooking show launched a search for its sixth Iron Chef (or master) Chef. For eight episodes, the search was narrowed down to a series of tough culinary tests. However, even after the winner had been selected, some replays followed, and we concluded we had to wait and see.

Last week, however, we finally caught a new telecast of "Iron Chef America" and our wait was finally rewarded. Once more, we were treated to the culinary expertise of master chefs who pushed the limits of creativity, technique and "kitchen science" to come up with exciting dishes that were innovative and just plain yummy.

Secret ingredient

Each round, the show has a secret ingredient, and last week it was "Elk." The unconventional theme challenged both the world's master chef (Bobby Flay) and his two challengers to come up with really interesting culinary concepts that fully evolved our backbone-tingling with the program. Let's hope that we'll be watching more new episodes than have aired.

Some viewers may wonder why with so many other cooking shows on TV, we chose the "Iron Chef America." Well, our interest in the program started many years ago, when it began as a Japanese cooking show for English audiences simply as "Iron Chef."

We liked watching that first program because we love Japanese cuisine. We also found the show unique because its Japanese master chefs regarded cooking as an art. The judges of the cooking competition added to its intrigue by wearing poetic with their evaluations and critiques.

In essence, this got to be quite odd and interesting as the judges giving on and on about the primarily naturally exquisite quality of the main axis of the food that he was, oh, so reverentially examining.

Tradition

On a less radical level, however, we learned a lot about Japanese cooking and the long tradition that came with it.

When the Americans version was launched, we liked how it was able to combine the best of the Japanese original with new touches that made it more contemporary and international in both attitude and output. So, we continue to watch and hope there is no title duty, despite the competition now provided by scores of other cooking shows on the tube.

Word of Mouth

Sandy Daza

Superior quality

"Oh my gosh!" were the only words I could utter after tasting the cake. Yes, I'm a self-confessed chocoholic. But, I always try to stay healthy—so, if I see something that's not too healthy, I will only do so if it's of superior quality.

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E-mail: cutiejones@yahoo.c

Dans exhibit benefits Sagip Bubay foundation

ARACELI LIMCACO DANS' SOlo exhibit, "Colado at Bato," at Ayala Museum's Artitopium Duty 15-17) is a benefit for the Sagip Bubay Foundation. Funds from the many projects for traditional patients at the Philippine General Hospital.

The foundation helps patients **prostate medications and urological** initial diagnostic work-ups, as well as supports the medical training of OPWDS students, residents and fellows. A lot of money is needed as these important endeavors, so Dans' exhibit is truly for a very good cause, and deserves everyone's support. This overwhelming-ly, as comes Dr. Ivy Jaime Lee (09208 820 0987).

'It's Alive'

Joseph Russell's new horror-thriller, "It's Alive," **topbills Bjorn** Phillips and James Murray as lovers and Patrick, the excitedly expectant parents of their new baby —but, something gruesome happens on the delivery room. All the doctors and nurses are murdered! Then, when the new parents proudly bring their baby home, some people start disappearing! Is the baby's true nature revealed, forcing her to choose between her love for the newborn child and her family. The film international release opens on July 22.

Voices honored for arts and culture promotion

Hardworking Manila councilor Lou Veloso, continues to be on the forefront of arts and culture in his beloved city. Handing the commendations! Manila Theater Foundation in Sta. Ana to help hone the talents of up-and-coming artists. On June 22, Veloso's efforts were validated when he was awarded the "Pamalay ng Sining ni Kalinangan" special award.

MONTAGE

All set for 'Hollywood Olympics'

From July 11 to 18, 29 Filipino performing artists will be competing in the 13th World Championships of Performing Arts (WCOPA) in Los Angeles. This year's delegation is led by Carla Cruz, Glaze Guerrero and Richie Reynoso.

The country's best women for singing honors include Martha Joy Bowie Fabian, Rhynnie Morales (a protege of the Spotlight Artists Center), King Cruz, Jessica Reyes, Jeanne Andrea, Cleo Valentino, Manila Mines, Blonde Rosenberg, Michi Bravo, CJ Concepcion, Mia Sinagpulan, Gay Lankaster, Jasmine Hilot, Kaloy Pilaro and the Young Sinatra of the Philippines, Quarren.

Charlene Gonzalez endorses ForMe

Charlene Gonzalez is the new endorser of ForMe, a female clothing line under fashion retail powerhouse, Golden SACL, that caters to different body types and sizes in different fashion styles. Charlene joins other endorsers, Isabelle and Gia.

dzRH marks 70th year

Manila Broadcasting Company's flagship station, dzRH, turns 70 on July 20 with a retrospective exhibition at the ABS-CBN Hall and a commemorative book. There will also be a marching band competition, the launch of a new dzRH jingle at a free concert on 8 p.m. on July 18, on the Quirino Grandstand. Activities begin on July 13.

Hosting workshop

The Learning Arena is offering a seminar-workshop by Butch Albarracin—"Effective Hosting and Emceeing for Beginners and Professionals" on July 25 at the SMX Convention Center (Bayan 1). Call 577-0945 or 434-7482.

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Movies on TV

On HBO today at 4:15 p.m., "Serangkot." Tomorrow at 7 a.m., "Any Given Sunday." July 13 at 12:45 a.m., "What Dreams May Come." July 14 at 9 p.m., "Interview With." July 15 at 7 a.m., "Holiday." July 16 at 4 p.m., "A Perfect Day." July 17 at 5 p.m., "The Bourne Ultimatum."

On Cinemax today at 9 p.m., "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom." July 13 at 9 a.m., "The Last Mimzies Please Forth." July 14 at 7:15 p.m., "Psycho." July 15 at 9 p.m., "My Mother's Birthday." July 16 at 9:15 p.m., "The Assignment." July 17 at 5 p.m., "The Bedford Incident."

DANS: Raises funds for indigent patients.